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Vol. 12-#2-Issue 68-February/March 2016

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# ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

10 YEARS  
A DECADE  
OF DECADENCE

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## Torrefy

Interview by Michael Carnage

Torrefy has been around the island scene for a few years now... They've started doing more shows and traveling a bit, playing for some bigger bands and getting to be more than just a house-party band. Over the last two months or so, I started hearing a lot more about them, so I got together with John Ferguson for an interview.

**Absolute Underground: It's been about two years since I've interviewed you guys, what's the biggest change you've made in those years?**

John Ferguson: We've made a lot of progress since we last talked, from playing huge shows with Onslaught, Artillery, Archspire and Havok, to hitting the studio to record our second full length album, *The Infinity Complex*. On top of that, we have broken in to the Vancouver scene and made some awesome friends over there. New material has been written and new equipment has been bought, all in all, we have improved as a band and can't wait to see where we are two more years down the road!

**AU: What do you think is the best thing you've done as a band in the last year?**

JF: Hit the studio! We've been listening back on the tracks as we master them, and we all honestly believe this album will be highly noted and have quite an impact in the West Coast metal scene. Be stoked!

**AU: You competed in the Wacken Metal Battle Canada last year, how was your experience and will you do it again this year?**

JF: It was an absolute blast! We popped our Vancouver cherry at such a huge show and met some awesome people, including Gustavo, the badass sound wizard who has been recording us. We didn't make it through to the Toronto round, which bummed us out at the time, but the benefits of meeting the people we did and gaining notoriety on the mainland soon outweighed the Toronto trip, and we are filled with anything but regret! Unfortunately due to time constraints and our current focus on releasing and promoting the album, as well as multiple massive shows such as Warbringer, Enforcer, Nylithia, and Striker, we will not be competing in this year's Metal Battle, but we will be rooting for our island brethren who are going to battle!

**AU: I hear you have a new album almost ready to go, how's that coming along?**

JF: So well! We spent just over a week in the studio recording our hour-long, nine-track opus, *The Infinity Complex*. Listening back on those tracks gave us all thrashy ear boners that cannot be tamed... and that was before mastering! It's a concept album with superior production to our first album, *Thrash and Burn*, which will give it a cinematic feel, perfect for shaking your skull inside your head. You may think you're ready for this, but you have no idea!

**AU: What kind of promo do you have going on for this album? How can people get it, or help out?**

JF: We are trying something currently that we haven't seen another metal band do. We are utilizing the Kickstarter website to collect pre-sales on the album in an attempt to break even on production costs before the album is officially released. We've gotten some unbelievable pledges and are more than halfway past our goal. I'm not sure if the campaign will still be running when this is printed, but following us on Facebook, sharing our posts, or even sharing

our music with your metalhead friends is the very best way to support and help us in this uphill climb we call the music industry.

**AU: What's your favourite venue to play on the island?**

JF: Logan's, for sure! It's not the biggest, or the cleanest, but it sure as shit is the most fun. Our very first show was at Logan's, and I don't believe we've had a bad experience there at any point. The atmosphere is perfect for thrash metal, and the bartenders are all veterans of the scene, able to understand convoluted drink orders over the cacophony of blast beats, screaming and shredding licks. We will be playing there with Nylithia on February 20th to celebrate our lead vocalist's 24th birthday. Come down and see just how crazy a Logan's show gets!

**AU: How do you feel about the Victoria music scene right now?**

JF: It just keeps growing! There has been an influx of new awesome bands, such as Terminal Sequence, and promoters have been bringing in crazy out-of-country bands. Vancouver in particular has exploded with massive shows happening, just one after another! It's getting hard to keep up!

**AU: How far would you guys be willing to move for your music?**

JF: I don't know if any of us would be willing to move. We are very proud of our city, and are extremely comfortable in this rainforest-covered paradise. However, we would happily travel far and wide to spread our music and taste the world's finest brews, maybe even beyond the

world! Torrefy plays The Moon 2016!

**AU: Where do you see the band going in the next year?**

JF: The moon... or if that doesn't work out, hopefully on a tour promoting *The Infinity Complex* as well as any festival we can get on. If we are feeling particularly ambitious, we will try and get recording the third album, which is a song or two away from being written, by the



end of this year. Our main mission is getting this album spread out across the globe and to continue knocking bands off our bucket list (we're looking at you, Toxic Holocaust and Vektor), and as always, we will be trying our very best to overdose on thrash while partying with the coolest metalheads all across the great white north! Thanks for chatting Michael, and Absolute Underground! We will see you in the fucking pit, but until then, stay thrashy!

<https://torrefy.bandcamp.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/torrefy>

PHOTO CREDIT: Kevin Eisenlord

## VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY



## Black Wizard

Interview by AU Editorial

**Absolte Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?**

Adam Grant: Alright! You're gonna be talking with the Russian prince, Eug Parkomenko, most infamous for his general love of eating and driving. And myself, Adam Grant, who probably will ask to bum a smoke from you before the end

of this chat.

**AU: You're releasing your new album, *New Waste*, worldwide on January 29th via Listenable Records, is that right? How did you guys end up on Listenable? How has the experience been, working with an overseas label?**

AG: You bet. It's been super positive so far. We met Laurent from Listenable on our first tour in Belgium, and he was really into the tunes and told us to keep in touch. So naturally, ever since, we've been very stoked.

Eug Parkomenko: Yeah, they're putting a great deal of work and time in for us to get this album out all over the world. It's been quite an awesome experience.

**AU: Tell us about the new album itself! The title is a coy play on the name of your hometown**



## VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

Stokes, so he can take the credit for how rad that piece really is. Nah, we don't stick to any kind of definition - we're definitely against that. We are inspired by so many things that it would be redundant to categorize it.

**AU: The artwork for *New Waste* is very distinctive - how did it come about? Does it reflect the themes on the album?**

EP: The art was done by the amazing Alison Lilly.



We just asked her to listen to the record and basically that was her interpretation of what she heard. She did beautiful job on such short notice. We are very stoked!

**AU: You guys took a trip to Europe recently - tell us about the experience! What's the craziest thing that's happened while you've been on the road?**

AG: It was fuckin' amazing, as always! Like many have mentioned before, you are treated with such respect and hospitality out there, it feels like a dream. We were playing a day show at The Pit's [sic] in Belgium, me and Stokes were drunk and saw some cool-lookin', shit-disturbin' kids. So we walked up to 'em to see what they were breaking, and they ended up trying to beat Stokes up and hucked a shit-ton of chestnuts at us.

EP: The god-damn Austrian boys that toured with us were the best part! Made some friends for life. Everyone should check out a little band called Pastor!

**AU: Any final words for the readers of *Absolute Underground*? What should we know about The Wiz that we don't already?**

Black Wizard: SEE YA REAL SOON!  
*Catch Black Wizard's album release show on February 27th at the Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver, BC, featuring Mos Generator, Ancients, Waingro and Man The Wolf.*  
[www.facebook.com/blackwizardband/](http://www.facebook.com/blackwizardband/)  
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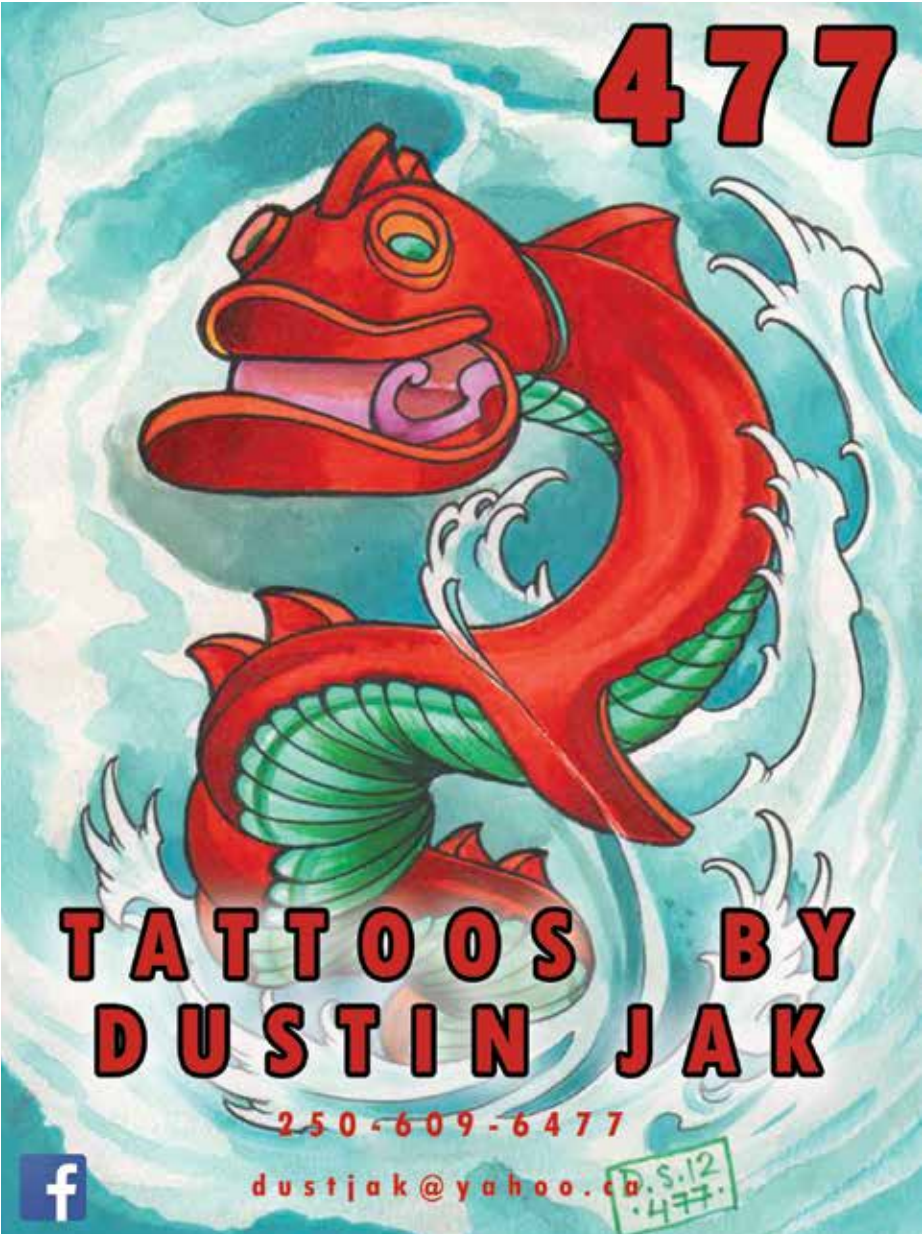
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**Haiduk**  
*Interview by Adam Van Thiel*

Straight from the depths of Calgary, Alberta, comes the all-destroying fury of Haiduk, a tempestuous whirlwind of extreme metal meant to summon and exalt entities from far beyond the realm of established form. Haiduk is quickly picking up steam in the Canadian metal underground, garnering considerable attention and favorable review for the new album entitled *Demonicon*, a brutal, light-consuming follow-up to 2012's *Spellbook* album. The mastermind behind this project, Luka Milojica, was kind enough to grant me an audience and answer some questions about the band and the new album.

**Absolute Underground: First off, what is the meaning behind Haiduk?**

LM: A "hajduk" is a resistance warrior who lives in the forest and wages war against an invading army. It's a word from southeast Europe and the Balkans. In some regions, the word also means "outlaw" or "bandit." My background is Serbian, so it was a fitting moniker for an aggressive death metal warrior!

**AU: What is the history of Haiduk? I have heard it's a one-man-band, is that true?**

LM: Haiduk has always been, and will continue to be, a solo project. It's an entity I created in 2009 to channel my dark musical ideas. The first release was the 2010 demo, *Plagueswept*, which was a collection of the previous ten years' worth of accumulating material. After that, it was a clean slate, and Haiduk went into a distinctly new direction with a much faster and more aggressive style for the first full-length, *Spellbook*. I tried to write the darkest and fastest riffs and arrangements possible, coupled with sharp

production, to completely annihilate the listener. The new album, *Demonicon*, continues the aggressive approach with even darker and more technical riffing.

**AU: What about this particular brand of metal is appealing to you personally?**

LM: Metal is strength, darkness, independence and power. The speed and intensity of death metal represents strength. The evil, haunting atmospheres of black metal represent darkness: a path that few understand or choose to take. Forging ahead down a different path, completely disregarding what others think, is independence. The ability to manipulate and invoke strong reactions from others through music is power.

**AU: What is your musical background like? Was there something specific that got you started down this path?**

LM: I was into metal from a very early age: Sepultura, Slayer, Megadeth, Testament, etc.... I was always a creative person, regardless of the medium. So when I bought my first guitar, it was just another tool to express my creativity. Fueled by metal influences, I started composing right away: writing riffs, drum tracks, vocals, bass lines and arranging songs. I did everything myself, refusing to work with anyone else, which started posing challenges in terms of really moving things forward. I had all these songs written and no one was ever going to hear them. So finally, partly after hearing about solo projects like Burzum, I was inspired to proceed alone and record some of that material instead of letting it sit forever and collect dust. That collection of old material became the first Haiduk demo.

**AU: Haiduk is referred to as though it is a purely death metal band, do you feel like that is an accurate portrayal of your appearance and sound?**

LM: My goal is to evoke pure evil and darkness through music. I draw from the coldest elements of death metal, black metal and thrash to achieve that. The technical riffs, time signatures and deep vocals of death metal, the evil sound, cold atmosphere and imagery of black metal, and the

pure speed and energy of thrash. In order to create the darkest and most powerful sound, I take what I feel are the darkest and most powerful attributes of those styles of metal.

**AU: Do you feel certain beliefs - be they religious, philosophical or political - play an important part in the creation of your music in particular, and if so, would you be open to sharing some of them with me?**

LM: The themes of Haiduk have no relation to this world whatsoever. Instead, everything is set in a high-fantasy realm, which I've been developing for many years. You'll find a map of this world, The Realm of Callos, in the *Demonicon* CD booklet. It's a world of chaos, endless battles, demons, magic, monsters and strange beasts, kingdoms of the undead, ageless creatures deep underground, etc. Every Haiduk song is an aspect of this world, from stories in *Plagueswept*, like "Siege," "Timestill Abyss," "Demon Descent," to the black-magic concept album, *Spellbook*, and the demon-themed album, *Demonicon*.

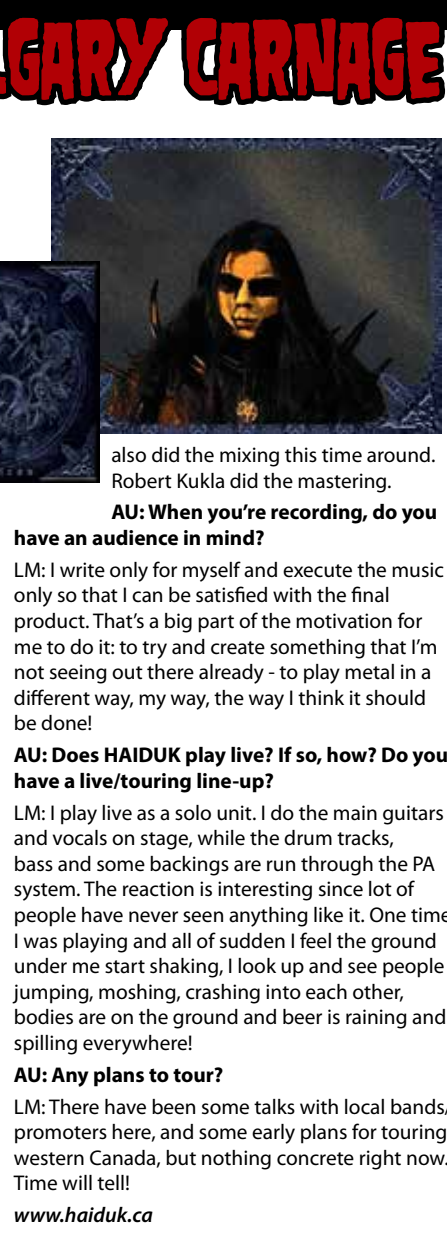
**AU: Can you tell me about your writing process?**

LM: I'll write riffs in a particular key and tempo, then arrange them in a way that flows and builds as much speed and momentum as possible before it reaches a climax and then quickly ends. Time is precious; I don't waste yours or mine. Drums and guitars are the skeleton of the songs and additional guitar layers, bass lines and lyrics are added along the way.

**AU: Where did you record this album? Who produced it?**

LM: I recorded *Demonicon* in my own home studio, as opposed to *Spellbook*, which was done at a more professional recording house and over a shorter amount of time. For *Demonicon* I had more time with the recording program to capture and focus on particular nuances and details of my guitar playing which I wanted to come through. I

CALGARY CARNAGE



also did the mixing this time around. Robert Kukla did the mastering.

**AU: When you're recording, do you have an audience in mind?**

LM: I write only for myself and execute the music only so that I can be satisfied with the final product. That's a big part of the motivation for me to do it: to try and create something that I'm not seeing out there already - to play metal in a different way, my way, the way I think it should be done!

**AU: Does Haiduk play live? If so, how? Do you have a live/touring line-up?**

LM: I play live as a solo unit. I do the main guitars and vocals on stage, while the drum tracks, bass and some backings are run through the PA system. The reaction is interesting since lot of people have never seen anything like it. One time I was playing and all of sudden I feel the ground under me start shaking, I look up and see people jumping, moshing, crashing into each other, bodies are on the ground and beer is raining and spilling everywhere!

**AU: Any plans to tour?**

LM: There have been some talks with local bands/promoters here, and some early plans for touring western Canada, but nothing concrete right now. Time will tell!

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FRI 12

BAYOU BASTARDS / THE MANTLE

SAT 13

WACKEN METAL BATTLE / STATUE OF DEMUR / STENNO

SUN 14

RIPPER ALLEY / TERMINAL HUMAN CONDITION

THUR 18

PERVCORE / STAB.TWIST.PULL / 2/3 OF NOTHING / PILLOW FIGHT / JAMES & THE SHADES

FRI 19

5TH ANNUAL CINNAMON HEARTBREAK CABARET

SAT 20

ON THE BONES / ATOMS & THE VOID / ELEPHANTS GERALD

THUR 25

TACO'S 40TH BDAY / NEVERTIME HIGH / EVEN EFFECT / ILLUMINATED MINERVA / FROM UNDER THE STONE

FRI 26

HIP HOP FROM DA BLOCK

SAT 27

SLEEPWRECK / KALI YUGA / THE GENESA PROJECT / ILLEMENTREE

THUR 11

WACKEN METAL BATTLE / CONCRETE FUNERAL / HROM / NARAKA / NUCLEAR OATH

FRI 12

HAZZERD / CITIZEN RAGE

SAT 13

FULL GROAN DELINQUENT / BATS OUT

**MARCH**

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FIREWATER FRENZY / STRAY ARC & GUESTS

FRI 4

FALSE FLAG / TERMINAL HUMAN CONDITON / RIPPER ALLEY / THE BUFFET / NARAKA

SAT 5

JUNKIES RUSH CD RELEASE / CONCRETE FUNERAL & GUESTS

THUR 10

HIGH VOLTAGE VARIETY HOUR

FRI 11

WACKEN METAL BAND / CALGARY FINAL / BANDS TBA

SAT 12

7'S WILD CD RELEASE PARTY / SOUTHBOUND CROW

THUR 17

ELECTRIC REVIVAL / RIOT CITY

FRI 18

JUST HAZE PRESENTS ST. PATTY'S DAY CELEBRATION

SAT 19

GENERAL'S CONNECTION

THUR 24

FOLD SINGLE RELEASE PARTY W/ GUESTS

FRI 25

T B A

SAT 26

MERKULES W/ MATT BREYNER & CASPIAN

SUN 27

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20 SLOWCOASTER  
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22 DICKENS PAINTING PARTY

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29 DRIVE-IN DOUBLE FEATURE

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18 CHELSEA GRIN  
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19 HANG THE DJ  
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21 DICKENS PAINTING PARTY

24 ALKATINE

26 CHRON GOBLIN  
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Germ: The name comes from a Sonic Youth single. They did a version of the song "Flower," where all the F-words were badly censored and that was the name of the song.

AU: What are your influences?

Germ: We get our inspiration from of everything we listen to. We like rock and alternative music, and stronger stuff like hardcore, grunge and punk. Some of the bands that we could say are big influences are Fugazi, METZ and Sonic Youth. You might hear a little bit of all that in our songs.

AU: Is there a topic you guys like to talk about in your songs?

Germ: Hmm, I wouldn't be able to say that we talk about a particular topic in our songs. They are more about a state of mind, lots of anger.

AU: Was it quick for you to find the sound you wanted to give the band?

Germ: Yes and no. We had a general idea of what we wanted to have and we already had some riffs before we started the band. What took the longest was to get the chemistry going between all of us. Since it was the first time we got to play with Dorian, we had to get the sound going, but he was a real Keith Moon and the train started to get going. All the rest came along.

AU: Did it take you a while to come up with the new songs for your demo?

Germ: It really depends on the song. Sometimes, with just one practice, we already have a structure done. For other songs that are five or six minutes long, it took us a little longer (because) we have to try for a while before we get the good riffs together.

AU: Do you have other songs that we might hear live?

# Anti Fuckword Radio Edit

Interview by Andre Laniel

Absolute Underground: Who is in the band?

Germ: Dorian is on drums, Sam plays the bass, Arno and me sing and strum the guitars.

AU: How did it all start?

Germ: Me, Sam and Arno talked about starting a new band that was noisy, that would sound like the 90s... something different compared to what we usually do. Arno knew Dorian, and we just started to play together. It was an instant connection.

AU: What inspired the name of the band?



# MONTREAL MASSACRE

Germ: Me and Sam, we have a little side project named LOSR; we just released a video for one song and another one is coming out soon. It is a slow project that we work on during our spare time. I also play drums for the punk band, Les Ordures Ioniques!

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# Rum Rebellion

## Rum Rebellion

Interview by Mr. Plow

Celtic punk pirates, Rum Rebellion, sail the high seas with their drinking anthems; they recently allowed Mr. Plow permission to come aboard their ship and be regaled with stories that have spanned the last 10 years.

**AU: Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?**

RR: Rum Rebellion: We are Rum Rebellion. What do we do? We mix Celtic, punk, oil and maritime influence, similar to the way bartenders mix various kinds of booze to make a Long Island Iced Tea. We have partied all over the US with the punks and skins, now we're gonna party in Canada! Our current lineup is: Dave Noise, vocals & acoustic guitar; Big T, Irish whistle; Ty, electric guitar; Lonny Loke, bass; Jon, drums.

**AU: How would you describe your live shows to someone who has never heard of you?**

RR: Rum Rebellion shows are upbeat and high energy. One minute you're dancing a jig, the next you're stage diving into the pit. There's lots of chanting along with your fist in the air. Usually the floor is covered with a swimming pool of beer and sweat by the end of the show. Most people who've been to a Rum Rebellion show describe it as "a fun party" or "a great time!"

**AU: You are celebrating ten years of Rum Rebellion... What are some highs and lows over the last ten years?**

RR: There have been many more highs than lows. High points include getting to tour with Krum Bums in 2010 and Opposition Rising in

2014... seeing Boston MA for the first time was a highlight for us. The biggest reason we have kept this going for so long is the overwhelming amount of support we have received from people during our many tours... we appreciate the dirty floor of every punk house we've been lucky enough to get to crash on while we're 2000 miles from home. We've got a huge family now! The biggest low points are when a band member leaves and we have to replace them - it's frustrating to feel like you're stepping backwards.

**AU: What made you decide to play Celtic punk drinking songs?**

RR: We're punks (and skins) who like to drink. Some of us are from Celtic backgrounds. 'Nuf said.

**AU: Do you often get compared to the Dropkick Murphys or the Real McKenzies?**

RR: Yes, especially Dropkick Murphys and The Pogues. We've been compared to The Real McKenzies twice in reviews. It makes sense, as there are not a lot of well-known bands playing pub rock.

**AU: You have released four albums so far, is there anything new in the works?**

RR: We are starting to write songs for what will be our most ambitious release yet - a double album. One of the albums will feature the punk and oil aspects of the band, while the other will explore what we can create in a more unplugged environment.

**AU: Any interesting stories from the road you care to share?**

RR: There are too many stories. Long story short: we named our 2009 summer tour "Come Hell or High Water," and that's exactly what we got. Our van broke down so many times it became

a joke by the end of the tour. At one point, we broke down and had to smuggle some of our bandmates in our shitty trailer while getting towed and the tow driver drove our trailer into a ditch with some of us inside.

**AU: You guys are part of the Pyrate Punx family. Explain what Pyrate Punx is.**

RR: Pyrate Punx is a network of affiliated underground show booking collectives for punk, metal, and oil. There are now over 50 chapters worldwide. The majority of chapters are on the US West Coast, but chapters also exist in Europe, Australia, and SE Asia. We book, promote, and run shows. We also feed and house touring bands. Basically, we try to treat people the way we would want to be treated when we're on the road. And we like to party. A lot.

**AU: Name up to five things you know about Canada.**

RR: 1, The autumn leaf change of Acer saccharum (sugar maple) in Quebec and Ontario is visible from space. 2, Vikings were trading with Native Americans and built permanent settlements on the Canadian east coast over 300 years before Columbus "discovered" America. 3, Yoho National Park contains one of the world's best fossil beds. 4, Canada has the world's second largest land area, but has the world's longest coastline (152,100 miles). 5, When we first played with the Real McKenzies in 2007 in Portland OR, they accidentally scraped my car with their trailer while backing it up. I made them all sign the scrape on my car with a sharpie marker. I never

## PLOWS PICK

painted over it.

**AU: Shamelessly promote anything here.... (websites, YouTube, Facebook etc.)**

RR: Check out [www.rumrebellion.net](http://www.rumrebellion.net) - from there you can link to most of our other sites online. The website includes all of our song lyrics, hundreds of photos and show flyers, music, videos, concert dates, reviews, an online merch store and more. Other sites online include: Facebook:



[www.facebook.com/rumrebellionofficial](http://www.facebook.com/rumrebellionofficial) and Reverbnation: [www.reverbnation.com/rumrebellion](http://www.reverbnation.com/rumrebellion) Music available thru: [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com), [www.interpunk.com](http://www.interpunk.com), iTunes, Google music, Amazon and other sites. Streaming radio: Pandora, Spotify, last.fm and other sites. We are also on YouTube and Twitter.

*Catch Rum Rebellion March 25th at Pat's Pub with Motorama and Obscene Being*

PHOTO SOURCE: [rumrebellion.net](http://rumrebellion.net)

## Those Things

Interview by AU Editorial



**AU: Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Jeff Speers: Hey, I'm Jeff Speers and I'm known for playing the guitar somewhat proficiently! I used to be in a band called Racer Ten and a few other lesser known Alberta bands. Also, Carly and I were on a terrible reality TV show a few years ago!

Carly Tre: Hi! I'm Carly Tre, I sing and play guitar for Those Things. I'm known for my old punk/metal band, Cobweb Society, out of East Van (that used to be in the Jukebox at the American hotel), and I'm famous for peeing standing up.

**AU: Who else is in the band? Any previous bands of note?**

JS: Ken Burke is our bass player and a wicked sound engineer, he's recorded everyone from the Dalai Lama to Raffi to Luke Skywalker (for reals!) and Ray Hartmann (formerly of Annihilator) helped us out with the drums!

**AU: Give us a brief band history.**

CT: It started off with us wanting to play for our friends' weddings and a couple dramatic hairshows. Jeff and I worked together at a rock'n roll hair salon, we would crank our favourite music over the speakers, and at one point realized we were both into playing live shows. I had formed a band already, but it shifted when Jeff started sharing songs with some rad riffs and satirical lyrics; I was in.

**AU: What's the meaning behind the band's name?**

JS: Watch any zombie/creature movie - they never name the creatures, they always just say "those things are all over the place," or, "don't let me become one of those things!"

**AU: Describe your sound for the deaf people reading this.**

JS: This is always a tough one, I usually just say we sound like Blondie covering Iron Maiden!

**AU: What are you guys trying to say with your music?**

CT: It's like taking a really good hard look, and seeing beyond.

JS: It's about trying to stay human in our soul-crushing modern accelerated culture, which seems to want nothing more than to chew people up and spit them out as a form of deranged entertainment. Also, [the music is] catchy and you can dance to it.

**AU: What is the current state of the Vancouver music scene?**

CT: Not a lot of venues! Lots of people don't move or dance 'cause they are scared of what people will think of them, or something. I get it though, you gotta get warmed up. On the bright side, there are still bands that stick together and play some wicked shows.

**AU: Any other shredding bands we should know about?**

JS: I definitely have to mention our friends, The Corps, they totally rule and if you're a comic book/rock'n roll fan, you have to check them out! Also,

half of their band has filled in for us for shows at one point or another, it's kind of like a weird Borg thing. Invasives are awesome, too.

**AU: How many albums have you released?**

JS: Just the one so far, but we have a new single coming out on Sudden Death Records very soon!

**AU: Tell us about your latest release.**

CT: *Songs About Monsters* is a multi-genre, uppity cracker album with some contemplative eerie songs on there, too. It's mixed and mastered by some golden-ears motherfuckers, it's available in record form or on tape for your old beater car.

**AU: What are some of the songs about?**

CT: There is a lot of different subject matter... on our last album, we delved into the unsettling parts of the human psyche, death, and our belief systems. It's an acknowledgement of the monstrous side of us all. Yeah, there's a love song, but even in that song ("Inhuman Monster"), things turn sour and you see past the bullshit.

**AU: Tour plans?**

CT: We wanna do a mini-tour of Vancouver Island and a little of the Sunshine Coast!

**AU: What can people expect from your live show?**

CT: Jeff shredding, jumping about, and nodding his head righteously to the beat. Me, I'm crooning or being all intense-looking, reaching for your tortured soul. Drummer is being fucking awesome, and the bass is holding it all down with some deep-assed complementary shit.

**AU: Is it best to get drunk or stoned before taking in your show?**

CT: Both, I'd have to say. It'd best prepare you for the journey.

JS: I'm going to say neither, try it with a sugar buzz instead!

**AU: Tell us something you don't want your mother to know.**

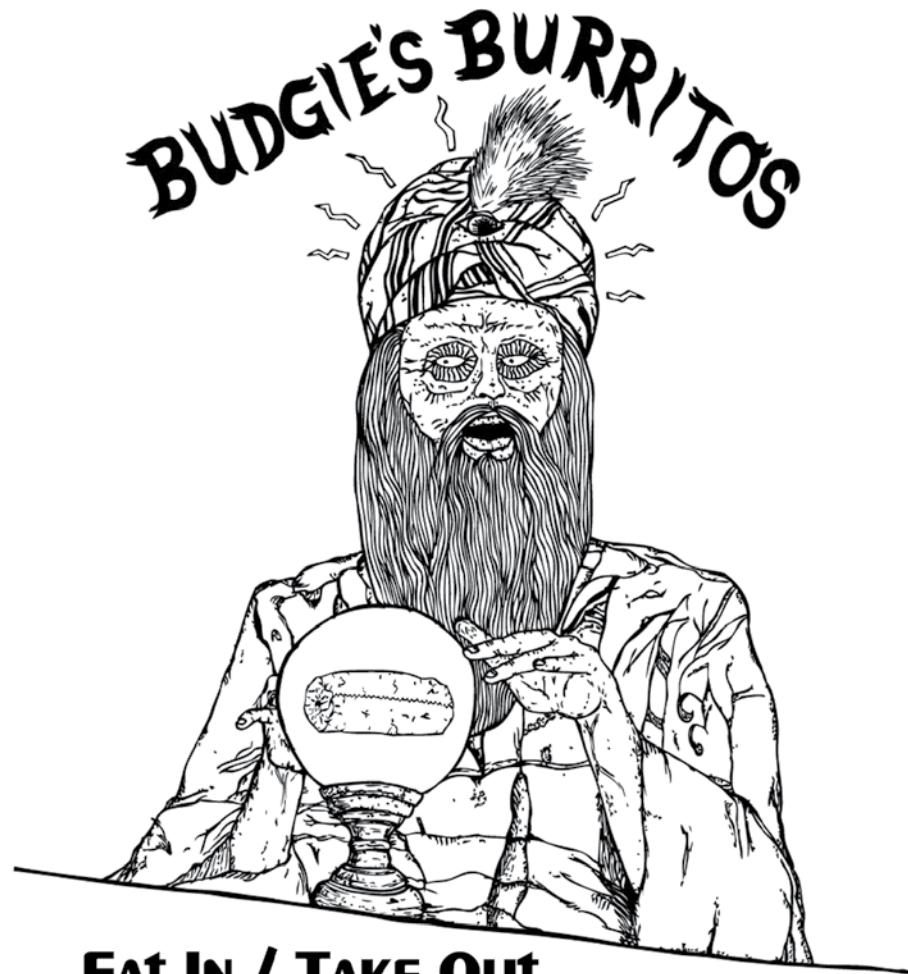
JS: I once pretended to be sick so I could stay home and carefully unwrap my Christmas presents, so I could see what they were because I couldn't handle the suspense! I wrapped them back up again and never told anyone until today!

**AU: Final words?**

JS: Hey, if you're a fan of fake blood and hamsters driving tiny Deloreans, make sure you check out our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/wearethosethings](http://youtube.com/wearethosethings)!

*Songs About Monsters is available for free download at [thosethings.bandcamp.com](http://thosethings.bandcamp.com)*

PHOTO CREDIT: Raymond Fryer



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Tales of the Tomb

Interview with Corey Skerlak  
By Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: How did you guys come together to form Tales of the Tomb?

Corey Skerlak: Tales started from Connor and I (Corey), learning some of our favourite metal tunes on acoustic guitars... We decided to write some of our own songs, not really thinking anything would come of it. After writing a few, we decided to try and start a band with them. It took us a while to recruit our bass player Bryn, but it was worth the wait. We finally came across [our drummer] John on Kijiji... About four or five months later, we had our first show in Calgary at Lord Nelson's Pub. After playing a few shows and recording our EP, we decided to add in a second guitar player, so Trez was added to the mix, completing our line up.

AU: Your lyrical content has a strong focus on true crime, notorious serial killers and extreme horror cinema. Can you elaborate on your interest in this area? What compels you to explore these themes in your music?

CS: We first started exploring writing songs about these ideas because of other bands we were really into. It's hard to say the band Macabre didn't inspire the entire creation of this band, because it kinda did. So we initially wrote some of our first songs about true crime and serial killers. Developing more of the band's image and sound, we decided to focus the band not only on serial killers, but on portraying that what goes on in the real world can be far more terrifying than fiction. We start incorporating other ideas such as cults, and conspiracies. The running idea of how scary real life is pushes us to seek out the most confusing and horrific incidents that have occurred.

AU: The aural aesthetic of your music—particularly the melding of heavier death metal elements with the more melodic vocals and guitar riffs—reflects the interesting dichotomy of serial killer psychology, wherein one instance it can be interpreted as very harsh, disturbing and heavy, and in another instance is very bleak, melancholic and heart-wrenching. Was this something you guys intentionally strived for in writing and producing your music?

CS: Yes, we always wanted our music to recreate the experience we are telling in our songs. The band evolved into being a representation of what is horrific about real life. We have always wanted our songs to make you feel like you are going through what the people in them have gone through, be it from dying from a forced overdose, or being chased around by a crazed killer. [We're] trying to put you in the shoes of the victim or in the mind of the killer.

AU: How would you describe both your overall sound and stage presence?

CS: Our music is very aggressive and violent, so we like to recreate that live in our performances. Thrashing around on stage, headbanging as hard and fast as we can. When we have time, we even like to put up "CAUTION" tape around the stage to make it feel more like you are at a crime scene. We are still evolving our stage presence, and trying to find more exciting and interesting ways to present our songs. In the future, we would like to make our stage experience as intense as we can.

AU: Your songs have covered the gruesome true-to-life tales of Robert Pickton, John Bunting et al., and Dr. Harold Shipman, as well as notorious horror movies such as Guinea Pig's Mermaid in a Manhole. What are some other monuments of depravity you would like to cover in your music?

CS: We have a lot planned for future songs.

SHR-EDMONTON

Right now, we are working on a song about an unexplainable incident in Russia. Our next release is going to be more conspiracy-based than the first EP. We have already written a song about 911, which we debuted at Villainizer's final show. We plan on touching on some of the conspiracies surrounding The Beatles, as well. Some future songs will also touch on cult leaders, more horror and we will also have a lot more serial killer-based tales coming too.

AU: Tales of the Tomb's first EP, Volume One: Morpras, was released in November of 2015. Are there plans to release a full-length studio album sometime on the near horizon? If so, what can Tomb fans expect from it?

CS: We do have plans to do a full-length, how soon is yet to be decided. We are going to release at least one more EP before we try to tackle any of the ideas we have for a full-length. For our next EP, we are going to focus more on conspiracy-based tales. We really want to ramp up our playing and bring a more violent and intense package. If everything stays on track, we should be going into the studio by summer.

AU: Morpras was mixed and mastered by Dan Swano, ex-member of death metal legends



Bloodbath, at Unisound, where other heavy hitters such as Dark Funeral and Opeth have recorded. How did your connection with Swano and Unisound come about, what was it like working with him and are there plans to continue doing so for subsequent recordings?

CS: I had a classmate who had hired Dan for an album he had made before he went to school for his band. The album sounded great and my classmate told me Dan did some vocals on the album, too! Knowing this when the time came for us to record our EP, I always wanted to try and get Dan. We actually didn't email him until we were almost finished recording. But when we did, he agreed to mix and master the EP... Everything was over email, but he was very easy to work with, he made our EP sound amazing. We will definitely be working with him again.

AU: Do you have any plans to tour this year? What shows do you currently have lined up for 2016?

CS: We're currently planning a tour of Alberta and BC for this summer, aiming for late July. Hopefully we will be going out to Vancouver Island and back. We have a couple shows booked for 2016... we are playing the first round of the Edmonton Wacken Battles on March 11th, and are also going to be opening for Bookakee and Gorod on the Edmonton date of their upcoming tour. We would like to hit the road as much as possible this summer.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to share with Absolute Underground readers?

CS: Thank you for reading our interview! We're very thankful Absolute Underground has interviewed us and stoked you read it. If anyone has any questions on the band, booking, songs, or reasons why we choose to write about a certain person or incident, contact us. You can find everything Tales of the Tomb on our website www.talesofthetomb.com. Thanks again!

PHOTO CREDIT: Slayer of Pixels

YOUTH DECAY

RAIN CITY

Youth Decay

Interview by David Goertzen

Youth Decay comprise Stu Ross (Comeback Kid, ex-Living With Lions, ex-Misery Signals, Lowtalker), Benjamin Gibbs (The Grave Life), Dana Edwards (Carpenter), Loren Legare (Living With Lions) and Stu McKillop (ex-Daggermouth, Aspirations). Their first full-length, The Party's Over, is a twelve-song album released on New Damage Records on November 6th, 2015. If you haven't had the chance to listen to this melting pot of a record, I highly suggest you crawl out from under that rock you have been living under and spin this shit. From start to finish, it had me moving, a perfect blend of hardcore, punk, and everyone's favourite hate/love genre, pop punk. They released a video for the title track, with a nice cameo from Chris Cresswell of the Flatliners lying on the front lawn after a party full of sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll. Youth Decay will be hitting the road in early February with Living with Lions, Danger Cat, and Fire Next Time, playing ten shows starting in Kelowna and ending in Vancouver, followed by another eight-show run with Silverstein, Emarosa, Cardinals Pride and Rarity, from February 25th to April 2nd. If you are lucky enough and Youth Decay comes to your town, don't be a goofball and miss out on seeing one of the best bands to come out of Vancouver in a very long time. I recently had the pleasure to ask Youth Decay guitar player Stuart Ross some questions about the future of this new Vancouver powerhouse.

AU: I read somewhere that when you guys originally started jamming, you were a three-piece. What were the deciding factors that drove you guys to make the switch to a five-piece group?

SR: When we first started playing together, we were, in fact, a three-piece with Dana on bass, Ben on drums and myself on guitar. Dana and I both planned to sing, as well. After a couple of practices, Ben wasn't loving playing drums and really wanted to play guitar. We then contacted our buddy Loren, who plays drums for Living With Lions, and he was super down. After a couple

more practices, we decided to try and find a singer. We approached Stu and he was quick to jump on board as well, so that's that.

AU: Does the Youth Decay band name have anything to do with the song from the all-female rock band from Olympia, Washington, Sleater Kinney?

SR: No. Not at all, haha. I didn't even know that it was a song title of theirs until I was looking at videos on YouTube. To this day, that might be the only song I've ever heard of theirs... and I don't remember what it sounds like. The chick from Portlandia is tight, though.

Honestly, it was just one of those things that pops into your head. My friends and I are constantly making up "play on words" kind of band names. What about "Youth Decay," you know, like "tooth decay," because we're getting old. That's pretty much how that happened.

AU: After these two tours you have coming up, what are the plans for Youth Decay? Recording more songs?

SR: We're hoping to hit the road one more time this spring, hopefully again in the summer and then in the fall. After that, we'll probably chill. We would love to get down to Fest this year. Hopefully we can work that out. In February, we're going to finish up a cover of Rancid's "Radio." We tracked the drums when we did The Party's Over and we're just now getting around to finishing the cover song up. We've already got some riffs in the rock bank, so we'll probably start putting those to use, come the fall/winter of 2016.

AU: I know you've toured a lot over the years, could you tell us the craziest thing you have ever seen on tour or been part of?

SR: That's probably one of the hardest questions anyone can ask. If you were to combine our time on tour collectively, you've probably got about 40 years of being "on the road." I've seen a lot of crazy shit in my day. Hilarious, unbelievable, violent, sad. Maybe the craziest thing I've ever done was shark tank diving. Other than that, you can imagine what sort of debauchery goes on with a bunch of mens' lives in their 20s and 30s. Lots of smokes and booze.

AU: What is your favourite place in Canada to tour/play and why?

SR: For me, Edmonton, AB will always take the cake. I grew up just outside of Edmonton. From about the age of 13, I started going to shows and getting involved in the punk scene. I owe a lot of who I am to the relationships, guidance and

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Abuse, Gin Wigmore, Leon Bridges, PEARS, and Alabama Shakes. Vancouver has some really

active in the scene and the shows there are fucking awesome.

AU: Any bands you have been jamming that we might not have heard of that we definitely should

experiences I shared with people in that city.

I'm sure a long-standing strong punk scene existed before my time, but around 1999/2000, hxc and metalcore really blew up in Edmonton, and the scene seemed to grow exponentially right before my eyes. It was really exciting. To this day, a lot of the same people are still

facebook.com/youthdecayband

newdamagerecords.com/bands/22/youth-decay/

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## Propagandhi

Interview by Stepan Soroka

It's Sunday morning and I'm supposed to speak with Todd Kowalski, bass player and vocalist from my favourite band in the fuckin' world, Propagandhi. I sleep through my alarm, call him late, and forget to turn on the recorder. Perfect. I actually manage to start recording the conversation a couple of minutes in, and Todd is a really easy person to talk to. The first thing that I need to ask, of course, is why Propagandhi hasn't been to Vancouver since 2009. Todd says its the mountains. Then we get on the topic of music.

Propagandhi plays Vancouver on Feb 5th and 6th and Victoria on Feb 7th, supported by Albany, NY's After the Fall. Local support will be provided by Burning Ghats, SLIP-ons, and Dummy Pops.

**Absolute Underground:** You've seen a lot of changes happen in the punk scene over the years.

Todd Kowalski: Green Day and the Offspring and that kind of stuff, that was kind of the big turning point, and then it just got streamlined. But, there were some good bands coming out... Born Against, Manliftingbanner, Spitboy and all that stuff was all really cool.

**AU:** So I guess the commercialization of the music wasn't seen as a positive thing by you.

TK: Naw, it totally turned me off. If it wasn't for these smaller bands, I would have left and never came back. I think it's still the same for me, actually. I like a lot of the

# PROPAGANDHI

small bands and I can't really think of any of the bigger punk bands that I like. But I like the smaller bands a lot - RIVVR, War on Women.

**AU:** So you feel like there is still a legitimate underground punk scene that exists?

TK: Yeah, for sure, and the bands are good, too. Sometimes when people mention punk, we think of the bigger bands and I have no interest, you know? But when I was a kid, I wasn't interested in any of those big bands either... or, there actually were none. Something about the sound and the style, I just find the smaller bands compelling. I think it's because they're not commercially viable, it's just a sound that appeals to my ear more... Just a little bit more raw, harmonic music.

**AU:** I would consider Propagandhi to be one of the "bigger punk bands." How do you maintain an independent sound?

TK: I guess we're shooting for what we like to hear, and I'm sure the other big punk bands are, too. Although I guess if they were just my songs, no one would want to listen to them (laughs). I like Chris' songs, and I always have. Even in the early wave I always thought Propagandhi was good.

**AU:** How are things going with the new guitarist?

TK: That's going awesome. She's a cool person to be around and a hard worker and totally gives'er when she's playing. She plays with a lot of heart. We've only played four shows, but they have kept getting better.

**AU:** Did you guys get a lot of submissions for that position?

TK: More than 400, and lots of people were really good, too.

**AU:** Wow, that's a lot to sort through.

TK: Totally. Sulynn was one of the people that really had something about her that really seemed awesome.

**AU:** Fuck yeah. I notice that you guys have been playing a new song at your recent shows. Does that mean that we can expect a new record in the future?

TK: Yeah, we're working on all the stuff right now. It's not an easy task. In the same way that I say I wouldn't want to listen to a lot of big punk bands, it also makes it ten times harder to make a bunch of riffs. It's hard to make music that you actually want to listen to, you know? I think that's why it takes us so long. None of us are exceptionally gifted, except for our drummer, Jord, he's got kind of a natural knack, whereas we just have to

work hard, otherwise we wouldn't end up listening to ourselves, either.

**AU:** So it doesn't get easier with time?

No, it gets harder, because you've already played so many riffs. You don't want to repeat yourself, you don't want to be boring... and the more you think about life and the world, the harder it gets to make lyrics. Your brain's going in every direction.

**AU:** What can we expect from the new Propagandhi record?

A continuation of the last two?

TK: There are a few turns and twists. It's pretty rockin'... it should be pretty killer. I don't foresee it coming out and being a pointless dud.

**AU:** Me neither. How is the music scene in Winnipeg right now?

TK: It's going good, lots of bands rocking it up. Mobina Galore are really good. There are a lot of good metal bands. I like a band called Aphelion. Immortal Possession, that's old death metal, one of the early old school Winnipeg bands who are playing a show in a couple months, that pumps me up. Lots of stuff going on.

**AU:** Do you still find yourself going to a lot of shows?

TK: Yeah, I go to a ton of shows. Lots of metal shows, lots of little punk shows. Every now and then I'll go see something like Judas Preist or Lee Aaron. I went to the opera not too long ago.

**AU:** Can you comment on what type of role you see punk, metal and heavy music having in the world at large?

TK: I guess the only real role is to inspire people to do things. There's a choice. Music can choose to inspire people or to just be schlock with lyrics that aren't worked on and riffs that aren't worked on. And bands can take their pick, I guess.

**AU:** What do you think about our recent change in government?

TK: It's gotta be a step better than Stephen Harper, that's for sure. He was going on like a crazy megalomaniac and being a shyster around the world. So it's gotta be better

but, obviously, we've lived under a Liberal government before, and there were a lot of shifty dealings, lots of dealings with aboriginal people, Canadian companies overseas, still selling arms to Saudi Arabia, there is still lots to be critical of. We'll see what happens. But I don't think of Justin Trudeau as Jesus come down from heaven or anything.

**AU:** They're gearing up for an election in the states too.

TK: Sounds like a lot of smart people are running (laughs). No, it's shockingly insane. Like I look at people that are less smart than the dumbest people I've known in my life, and they are running and doing well. I don't even need to mention who that is, because everyone knows.

**AU:** How do you think they get away with it?

TK: I don't get it. I literally think that people are either so stupid, or so hate-filled, or... yeah, it's one of the two. If I could figure it out I'd be happy, but I can't figure it out. I live in a world of confusion.

**AU:** I guess playing in a band helps to release some of that.

TK: Yeah, exactly.

**AU:** Who do you think would win in a fistfight between Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump?

TK: I would say Bernie Sanders. That's who I'd cheer for anyways. Trump would just breathe in his face and kill him with his breath or something. Or he'd get kicked in the stomach and release a world of gas. Good question.

**AU:** Thanks. Anything you'd like to add?

TK: I would like to give a shout out to Jimmy Bain from Dio and Rainbow who died last night. That sucks. The Dio records are my favourite records of all time. And we want to give a shout out to The Rebel Spell, a hello, obviously we are sad that Todd is gone, but we are looking forward to seeing Erin and the guys. And we are really pumped to be playing with Burning Ghats and and Slip-Ons. Fucking rights! That's the kind of tunes I dig. See ya and thanks for the interview!

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## Carcass

Interview with vocalist Jeff Walker

By Adam VanThiel

British death metal mainstays Carcass are about to embark on a North American tour with the likes of Slayer and Testament, just after touring around Europe with Napalm Death and Voivod. Lead singer Jeff Walker was kind enough to speak to us all the way from northern England about the upcoming tour, his thoughts on the current state of metal, and to share what Carcass has planned for 2016.

**Absolute Underground:** Let's start off with some

**questions about touring. How do audiences in Britain an Europe compare with those you encounter elsewhere?**

Jeff Walker: It really depends on where we go, you really can have good or bad gigs anywhere, like if you go to South America the audience is going to be more extreme, and if we go to Japan we have a great following with awesome crowds and good reactions. The thing is, with Europe and Britain, it feels different a lot of the time. We don't take it for granted that there is going to be and audience for us who will enjoy it... Like we just did a tour of Europe where we had to follow Voivod and Napalm Death, and after bands like that, you can definitely at times feel that there was crowd fatigue, and you know Napalm Death arguably had the best slot on the bill after

Voivod where people really had the chance to warm up with such an intense band. You have to take all these factors into account when you're playing a gig you know, and never take for granted that people are not going to be tired after an hour and a half watching other bands.

**AU: Do you have a specific city you like to play in?**

JW: Tokyo, because we have such a great audience out there, the crowds are very loyal and intense, you know, very fanatical, to put a word to it. They take it very seriously. I mean, I think American and European audiences can be quite jaded and spoiled, because there are always bands touring all the time, and there are always festivals, particularly in Europe where people can go to festivals in the summer or the winter that have like 50 bands... So I guess, to a certain degree, countries like Japan and places like South America are a bit more hungry. But I mean, even places in South America are getting exploited a lot now too, because a huge number of bands are playing there more and more. When we were going down there like ten years ago, the crowds were just insane.

**AU: Later this year, Carcass is touring with Slayer, any thoughts on that? Are you looking forward to it?**

JW: Yeah it's going to be cool because we haven't ever supported a band at that level, and it isn't our crowd, so it's a chance to play a new audience, the Slayer and Testament audience! We have always been sort of stuck in the little death metal ghetto that we're in, and whenever we have supported someone, it has always been our peers, like Napalm Death, so now it's a chance to play with a band that still sells hundreds of thousands of albums, and of course Testament is also quite successful, so it's going to be really cool.

**AU: When Carcass writes an album, do you go into it with expectations of how far it will go, or maybe with an audience in mind? Or is it more about yourselves and what you want to create musically?**

JW: Certainly the latter, I mean you can't go into writing and try to target any specific audience. That was downfall with our album *Swansong*, maybe it's only my attitude, how I approached it, but I was definitely conscious of the fact that we were writing an album for a major label and that's why it sounds the way it does, I mean we definitely dumbed the music down, so to speak, and we kind of exhausted the heart of it, the really extreme side of it. Not to say we were trying to make our music more commercial, but we dumbed it down, and dumbed-down music, so-to-speak, is what sells to larger audience. I mean, if you look at metal now, it's simpler and sort of more "lowest common denominator," and the more like that it is, the more successful it is, and Carcass just is "lowest common denominator" enough.

**AU: Do have a specific opinion on the global metal scene and the direction it has gone in, especially in recent years? Because I had read an interview with Bill and it seemed, not cynical but very..**

JW: Negative!

**AU: I didn't want to outright say negative, but what the hell, negative. Do you feel the same?**

JW: Yeah definitely, big knuckle-head bands basically just making music for rednecks and white trash, it's very simplistic music by numbers, and as I said, lowest common denominator stuff. You may think Bill was being negative, which he was, but you have to understand it's a very positive force in what we're



doing. If we didn't feel that way, we couldn't do what we do, because in a way we are trying to be the antidote for what we dislike in metal. What we see around us is the catalyst for writing the music that we do, because we do love metal, but it's metal from a different period. We love the classic stuff... there aren't really a ton of new bands around doing anything that interesting, and the... ones we like, remind us of the classics anyway.

**AU: Do you think the attitude and the message behind metal has changed?**

JW: Not really, some bands have gone PC, others have gone nation socialist, but these kind of ideas, left or right, were never really a part of metal anyway, metal is pure fantasy escapism. I mean, do you think it's changed?

**AU: Well I'm not really old enough to have witnessed the metal of the 80s and early 90s first-hand, but I listen to a lot of early Norwegian black metal, death metal, etc. I don't think the message has really changed...though certainly the whole aesthetic has. In the less underground sub-genres of metal, the extremity has certainly been lost**

JW: Well, when we started, "extreme" was certainly the buzzword, like the first Carcass album, the cover was genuinely shocking, but the reality now is that if you showed it to most kids they wouldn't flinch because they have seen worse things on the internet.

**AU: Do you have any intention to revive Blackstar Rising?**

JW: Nope, no way. I'm surprised at your age you know about that. It ended back in the late 90s and there is not much to get out of it now. It was basically valid for one album and that's it. I'm happy with Carcass... if I'm going to sing with a band... I want people to hear my vocals and know it's Carcass.

**AU: You were on the television show Red Dwarf, can you tell me a little about how you got involved?**

JW: The short answer is one of the actors on the show, Craig Charles, was from our area and had a children's music show that somehow got Napalm Death on as guests. Being on *Red Dwarf* as well, he invited them to be on that show, but they bailed on it last minute, so a few others people were asked but they didn't have Musicians' Union membership, so they couldn't do it, and as a last resort, they contacted us. Funnily enough, when we turned up in the studio they thought we were Napalm Death members. I saw [Charles] a few years later in a pub, but he didn't believe me when I said, "Hi, I was on *Red Dwarf* with you."

**AU: What are your plans for 2016?**

JW: We have the Slayer tour and a few shows in the summer, Bill's got an album coming out with the other band he plays in, Gentlemans Pistols, so he will play some shows with them, I play in another band called Brujeria, and we are waiting for that album to drop, so I'll be doing some gigs with them, as well. So somewhere in all that, we need to find the time to write an album, just to stop people from asking us about a new fucking record, haha.

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# motorhead LEMMY KILMISTER Memorial

"...And all my promises are lies, all my love is hate / I am the politician, and I decide your fate..." - "Orgasmatron," 1986

## Lemmy: Brave New World

By Erik Lindholm  
Photos credit to Kyle Harcott

"Lemmy" Ian Fraser Kilmister  
(24 December 1945 – 28 December 2015)

"...we are Motörhead and we play rock 'n roll..."

### Character study:

This is the article no one thought would ever be written – indeed, that no one ever wanted to write. The retrospective of Lemmy. With a rustic upbringing in the shadows of a bombed out post-war England, he grew to be the embodiment of hard rock culture, a man known for his straightforward, take-no-shit attitude. He lived life full speed through wine, women and song. That age-old formula for the good life got tweaked to suit his personal interests and became speed, groupies and rock. He did it his way.

Lemmy is widely known and respected in the music industry for having integrity and honesty – commodities in short supply. He played loud rock year after year, with a bottle of JD in one hand and Marlboros in the other. It was his authenticity of living the lifestyle, and constant time on the road on tour, playing to screaming crowds - that other bands, heavy or otherwise, hope and pray to achieve. It wasn't an act. It was him. There were no cash grab reunion tours like other 1970s rock bands active today. Fuck, they just never stopped playing! You know what you'll get when you open a Motörhead record: rock 'n roll. In 40 years of recording, there are few surprises. This dedication has made him a mythic figure in the global psyche.

"...Only way to feel the noise is when it's good and loud / So good I can't believe it, screamin' with the crowd..." - "Overkill"; 1979

### The themes and words:

While embracing the good life, spreading rock n' roll and touring the world for 40 years with Motörhead, Lemmy developed a strong distrust of government, religion and politics. At the same time his lyrics celebrated human energy and creativity – they would flipswitch and tackle the hardships seen along the way. How many! How many damn people Lemmy saw fall to drugs and alcohol, wind up locked in jail, get murdered, go broke, lose the plot. He read extensively on war and history. This bled into the darker lyrics and themes of the band – domination, control, oppression, self-destruction – themes which an honest observer of the world simply must report on. It can't all be love songs. The words implored us to be authentic, question authority and fight injustice while having a damn good time.

"More than any other rock musician, he is the baddest motherfucker in the world."

-David Grohl

### Humble beginnings:

At the start... there was nothing... no rock n' roll, no nothing; it hadn't existed yet! Black American blues and jazz artists provided the foundation on which it was all built. By the mid-1950s, those sounds had combined with a myriad of influences and shot across the pond like a thunderclap, bringing rebellious, fun-loving energy and upbeat tempos sorely lacking in a nation scarred by war.

The sounds of Little Richard, Elvis, and Chuck Berry captivated a young Lemmy via radio and records, and inspired him to pick up the guitar. After all, girls love guitar players. In '64 he joined The Rockin' Vicars, a rather successful straightforward rock band built in the tradition of classic American 50s rock... after a few years of touring in limited areas of England he'd lost interest. Seeing The Beatles play up close helped cement his love of rock and the lifestyle – so he said "sod off" to the Vicars and headed for big-city London to party like a demon and join any band he could.

Lemmy didn't find the right fit with a band till he found Hendrix;

In 1975, Lemmy told Sounds that Motörhead would be "the dirtiest rock'n'roll band in the world. If you moved in next door, your lawn would die." (On the formation of Motorhead, after being sacked from Hawkwind)

In '67 he joined as a roadie and did stacks of acid with Jimi. It was the emergence of British psychedelic rock and the height of the hippie movement that pushed him into Hawkwind, space rock psychedelic masters, in '71. Ironically, he did the wrong drugs to fit with the band, and he was busted at the US/Canadian border for possession of amphetamines in '75. He was consequently sacked from the band for drug use; Lemmy did speed when everyone else was on psychedelics. In an act of spite and rebellion, a new band was born: "Motörhead." It was slang for a speed addict. That is the rough story.

"It seems that our brave new world is becoming less tolerant, spiritual and educated than it ever was when I was young."

-Lemmy

"...And I will plead no contest // If loving you's a crime  
So go on and find me guilty // Just one more fucking time..." - "One More Fucking Time," 2000

"The main thing in life? A sense of humour. You lose that, and you're fucking done. May as well blow your brains out."

-Lemmy

### Killed by death: end of the road // Lasting legacy

Now, after his long and illustrious career, our hero is lost. We're all out there dissecting his life, how he lived so long, how he released 22 albums, how he toured for decades... what can we learn from him? In the rapid and constantly changing music industry, one of Lemmy's most noteworthy strengths was to simply be himself, unflinching and authentic. He embraced his character: the man who loved strippers, war history, a good laugh, reading, a strong drink, social commentary, and playing live. Whether he was playing in shit clubs or arenas, it didn't matter. He had the courage and determination to keep creating and touring for decades, regardless

"I'll miss him so much. We all will. There's a big hole in the music industry. as far as I'm concerned."

-Ozzy Osbourne

of profits or media response.

Through this steady character, Lemmy developed lasting and meaningful friendships with both veteran and young musicians while traveling the globe. He found respect across genres. While many figures in rock have thrived on creating distance between them and their fans, both physically and with imagery, Lemmy lived his life as a common man. His attitude was welcoming, approaching. You could find him with a drink at the local bar, playing the slot machines or the pinball, living in a small apartment crammed with music and war memorabilia. No pretensions.

"Integrity is everything to me. I will not die ashamed. I will live on my deathbed knowing that I gave it my best shot, and everything else is meaningless to me."

-Lemmy

At his funeral service in L.A., all the big guns of heavy music showed up to pay respects, and say a few words. [You can watch the broadcast online if you missed it] Point your attention to Dave Grohl, closing the ceremony. He tells the story of meeting Little Richard at LAX and getting an autographed biblical pamphlet from him. He had aimed to give it to Lemmy for his 70th birthday. With the reading of the psalm "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" and the placement of the pamphlet on the altar, the faithful Marshall amp and Rickenbacker bass striking a familiar dissonant chord and feeding back through the church – it had all come full circle. The musician that inspired Lemmy to start playing in the first place, Little Richard, went with him into the aether. And now the fans that remain – us – are left with our well-worn Motörhead gear, our memories, inspired to play and live and love from this great man. We build our altars and raise our drinks to the sky. The musician that inspired us, lives on.







**Mitchell Villa**  
*Interview by AU Editorial*

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to, and what styles of art are you best known for?**  
Mitchell Villa: My name is Mitchell Villa, I'm 28, I've grown up and live in Victoria, BC. I don't know if there is a name for my style, I borrow from a lot of different sources. I'm best known for large and aggressive paintings with bright and bold colours.



**AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?**  
MV: I've been drawing since I was a kid, I just copied what I saw in *Marvel* comics. I took private art classes all through public school. After high school I studied at Vancouver Film School and graduated from the Digital Design program. I have been focusing more seriously on my art over the past five years.

**AU: How would you describe the art you create?**  
MV: Abstracted realism, maybe. Ultimately I try to capture energy and movement. I prefer to work

on large canvases because you can really step inside the painting and it becomes more of a physical act. Painting big is kind of imposing, it's not this tedious little canvas on an arts and crafts table. A lot of my subject matter deals with paired opposites, so I combine real beauty with the grotesque.

**AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?**



MV: Artists like Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Jenny Saville, Picasso, Goya... But mainly, it's just daily life and stuff that I'm into, music, books, movies, etc.

**AU: What are some of the more interesting art projects you have been involved with?**

MV: In November, I participated in Creative Differences in Vancouver. I paired up with a buddy for a two-hour live painting competition.

The theme was "freedom," and we did a stereotypical American nuclear family. We ended up winning first place.

**AU: What mediums do you work in?**

MV: Acrylic on canvas, but I want to start working with oil soon.

**AU: Does most of your work tend to lean to the side of good or evil?**

MV: I prefer to work with darker subject matter. I've painted goats being slaughtered, Jesus getting his throat slit by Freddy Kreuger, cracked-out bikers

with syringes hanging out of their arms. I also just completed a full series of Victoria cityscapes, so I guess I do both.

**AU: What's the art scene like in Victoria, BC?**

MV: It's alright, for a small city. I have always just done my own thing and worked in a bubble, but lately I am trying to go to more shows and talk to more "art people," and it's been good.

**AU: What sort of music do you listen to when working on your artwork?**

MV: Metal. Lately, it's Revenge, Conqueror, Archgoat, Blasphemy, Black Witchery and the usual rotation of early black metal stuff, as well.

**AU: Has anyone ever considered tattooing your art on themselves?**

MV: No, not yet. I don't really think my work translates into tattoos very well, but who knows?

**AU: If you weren't an artist, what would you want to be?**

MV: Honestly, I don't know. I would probably be drinking a lot more.

**AU: Tell us about the Lemmy image you painted for this tribute issue?**

MV: I've been a Motorhead fan since high school, and have always wanted to do a Lemmy portrait. Visually, I find him interesting. I was doing a playing card series, and who better to be the ace of spades? It worked out well and I ended up selling the original to a dude I met while showing my work at the Motorcycle Roundup in

## ARTIST PROFILE



Cumberland.

**AU: Do you do custom work for people?**

MV: For sure, I have done several commissioned pieces. It's fun, working with other peoples' ideas. I have done everything from flowers for moms to memorial portraits. I would like to start doing album covers and explore more brutal imagery that people wouldn't normally want hanging on their walls.

**AU: Upcoming projects / art shows? Websites to promote?**

MV: I have my work at Habit Coffee in Victoria (552 Pandora Ave) until the end of February, and then a show at Untitled Gallery in Vancouver with Christian Whiticar in May.

My website is [mitchellvilla.com](http://mitchellvilla.com), and people can follow me on Instagram @mitchellvilla



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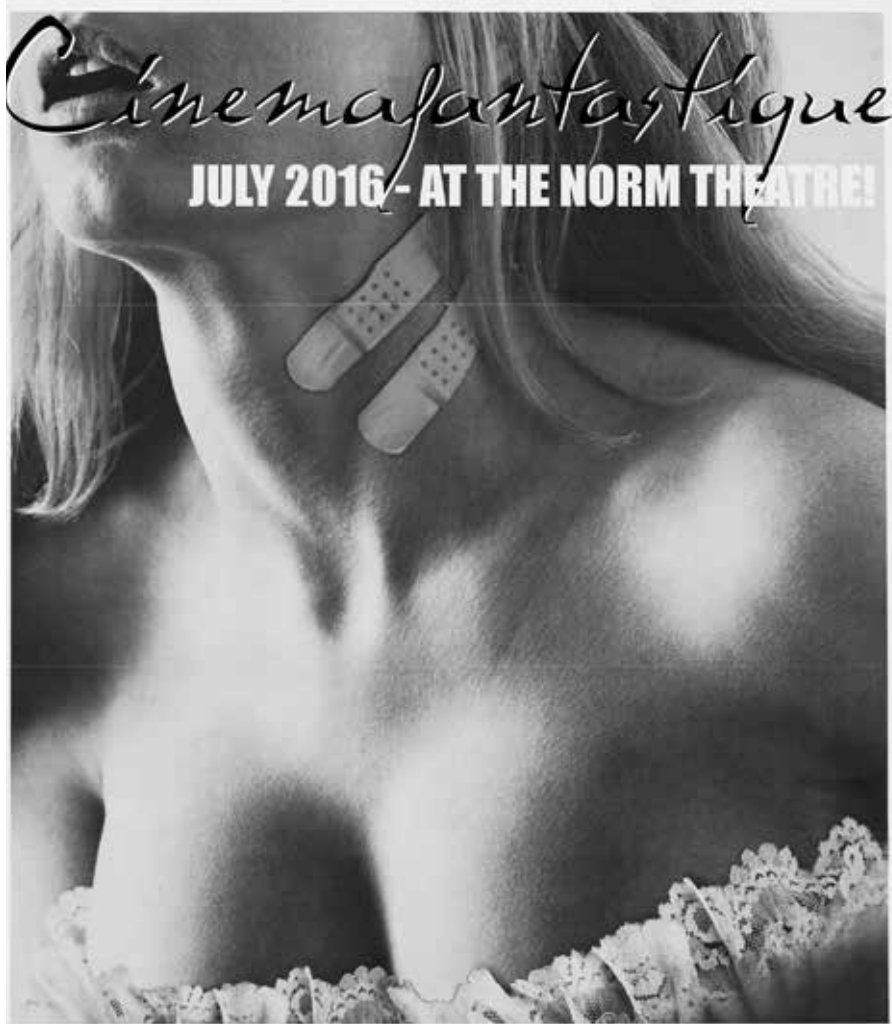
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# THOR

## Striking Vikings

By Reverend Donnie Black

101.9 FM CFUV and Fabio Productions present an advance screening of the award-winning documentary *I Am Thor*, followed by a performance by Thor and Zon: Son of Thor

Friday, March 11, 2016, doors at 8:30pm, movie at 9pm, concert at 11pm.

Viking Lounge (V-Lounge) at the Red Lion Inn, 3366 Douglas St, Ph: 250-475-7575

**Absolute Underground: Let's start by talking about the latest Thor deluxe reissues, *Only the Strong*, celebrating its 30th anniversary, and the *Unchained EP*.**

Thor: What better way to re-introduce Thor to a new generation of metal fans than by re-issuing two of my biggest selling records?

**AU: Both releases come with rare bonus features, including some intriguing archival video footage. Was this discovered recently or were you shrewdly saving the lot for such an occasion?**

Thor: I saved and owned a lot of material over the years. Some was stored in vaults and there was also lost footage that was found in my basement and storage facilities. It's a wonderful thing that they are still in good enough condition to be seen by the viewer as a window into another time era.

**AU: Now you have a new award-winning and critically acclaimed movie called *I am Thor*, and a new album released, *Metal Avenger*.**

Thor: Yes, I am very excited about the new releases. I am extra excited to showcase the film in Victoria and have the very talented



erupted the day before we were to fly out of North America. Who knew that Iceland was a volcano? They lied to the world when they named that country. Nonetheless, I wasn't going to let Surtr, the Icelandic volcano god, stop me. So with my black leather, smoke-stacked chariot, I tried flying through the hot volcanic ash... but I didn't make it. However, on a plus-note, the molten heat etched the lightning bolt into my Nordic skin permanently.

**AU: What is the Thor- Legion of The Inner Circle?**



Thor: It is a select league of the top Thor performers from each region of the globe. Only the very talented and selected few are allowed to hold the hammer. We have Iron Thor in Germany, Guardians of Thor in South America, Fin Thor of Finland, Arcon in Florida and more. Zon: Son of Thor represents the fifth and sixth corps legions of the USA and Canada. He is the cream of the crop, a finely honed soldier from the Thor Legion of the Inner Circle.

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## Absolute Album Reviews

### The Casualties - Chaos Sound Season of Mist

Chaos punks The Casualties have been around for a dog's age now, and show no signs of buying the farm. Their latest release from Season of Mist, Chaos Sound, attacks your ears with an all-too-familiar unruliness. Staying true to their street roots and punk rock platform, the album's tracks egg on the audience with crass gang vocals that will surely get fists pumping and pits-a-circling. It's your basic pandemonium.

The album begins with woman's ethereal battle cry and quickly moves onto the title track, which paves the road that most of their albums have already traveled. The tracks are hard, abrupt and in-your-face. Frontman Jorge Herrera barks out his poetic



justice with fingers pointed at greedy politicians and - obviously that punk rock staple for blame - society. Society, that beast of burden that "Murders Us All" and makes us "Work Our Lives Away." In the midst of their aggression, you will find songs like "Brothers And Sisters," laced with a true sense of their scene's camaraderie that echoes through epic fits of "Whoa's" and "Oh's." Jake Kolatis slays each song right in its guts with an interjection of vital guitar.

Although this release is exactly what you would expect from these dinosaurs, isn't it nice to be sure about something in this world of economic uncertainty? You obviously get what you expect and pay for. If you want a loud, fast, abrasive ear-fuck - you've come to the right place. If you like The Casualties, you will like this.

-Lori Meyers

## Absolute Film Reviews

### Get Mean Blue Underground

Get Mean is the newest spaghetti western to come out from Blue Underground. It stars Tony Anthony (A Stranger In Town) as the Stranger, and is directed by Ferdinando Baldi (Django, Prepare A Coffin). The Stranger is dragged into town and comes across a group of gypsies who task him with returning their princess to her home in Spain. All the Stranger wants for doing this long and tedious job is fifteen thousand dollars, but little does he realize that there are others out there that want the princess so they can claim an ancient treasure that only she knows how to obtain. This film is the third part of the three part Stranger trilogy and mostly takes place in Europe. Unlike most westerns made in Italy in the 60s and 70s, this film incorporates some aspects of fantasy and sci-fi into the mix. There is a horde of barbarians that is hunting down the princess and the Stranger has to go up against them. He is hanged and shot and beaten until, finally, he grabs as much ammo that he can carry and fights back. At times, Get Mean feels more like an adventure film or epic war film than it does western, but that just adds to the appeal. There is a lot to like about Get Mean, including the ridiculous situations that our hero is put into. The best part about this film is that, aside from the Stranger getting dragged into town by a horse



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at the very beginning, it doesn't feel like part of a trilogy, so you can go in without seeing the first two films and have a very satisfying watch. Westerns are getting popular again, with The Hateful Eight and The Revenant in cinemas, and other films like Django Unchained and True Grit coming out in the last few years, so I'm glad that companies like Blue Underground are releasing classics like Get Mean. The blu-ray / DVD combo is one of the best releases to come from Blue Underground! There are a ton of extras, including a booklet with notes written by spaghetti western guru Howard Hughes, interviews, trailers, behind the scenes and deleted scenes. The HD transfer of the film looks amazing and I would highly recommend picking this release up, even with the hefty price tag, as it's worth it. If you live in Calgary and love spaghetti westerns, make sure to check out the Calgary Cinematheque's Spaghetti Western Spotlight Series playing from January 14th to March 31st.

- Cody No Teeth

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**Making The Smalls: Forever is a Long Time Documentary**  
*By Ed Sum*

Playing during the 2016 Victoria Film Festival  
at The Vic Theatre  
808 Douglas St. Victoria, BC  
Friday, Feb 12 — 6:00pm  
Sunday, Feb 14 — 4:00pm

Director and writers John Kerr and Trevor Smith not only travelled with The Smalls on their 2014 reunion tour, but also filmed many hours of their performances to create *Forever is a Long Time*, a documentary that looks at their last moments as a band. The Smalls catapulted to fame in the 90s and instantly became part of the Western Canadian music landscape. These filmmakers took to their music just as immediately, when they were studying and producing works in the music video industry for clients such as HBO and FX Network. I had an opportunity to speak to them about the making of this movie and their thoughts about the band. The film will be playing at the Victoria Film Festival this year and it will be available to purchase in the Spring of 2016.

**Absolute Underground: How did the idea to make this documentary come about?**

Trevor Smith: Corb Lund [a founding member of The Smalls] gave us an early tip that The Smalls were planning to reunite for a reunion tour in 2014. Things were still rough and uncertain, but that preceding winter we'd committed to some kind of film tribute or experience with the band. I'd always felt the band, one of my great, musical loves, needed a proper... documentary made about them. And through the process of traveling with them on the tour, it became clear that the film wasn't just about the band, but about us 13 years later as grown men, reconciling that gap in punk/metal lifestyle.

John Kerr: For years, Trev and I have kicked around the idea of making this film, but the timing was never quite right for one reason or another. It sort of became an annual discussion with no follow-up until the next year, and then we'd both get busy again and the cycle would repeat itself.

I remember it started to become serious when we tried to get The Smalls to do a cameo in a Corb Lund music video several years ago.

**AU: Who was instrumental in getting the project off the ground and what made you decide to turn to Kickstarter to help make this documentary?**

TS: That summer, before X-Fest and Sonic Boom, John and I decided that we were in fact going to make a feature length film about The Smalls, and that there was

going to be this critical mass of fans and supporters of The Smalls going crazy within a few weeks. We opted to piggyback on the renewed energy, and involve the band's legion of supporters in the actual financing of the film. Crowd funding seemed like a logical fit in this case. We created a treatment, a creative brief, set the reward levels and went for it. Ultimately, it proved a worthy gamble.

JK: The demand for this movie was there right from the beginning. People were that if we didn't make it, then someone else might, and oh fuck, what if it was good?

literally begging us to make it, and ultimately we figured out that if we didn't make it, then someone else might, and oh fuck, what if it was good?

The Kickstarter Campaign was originally intended to be a marketing tool for early engagement with our audience and as a top-up to broadcast license fees and tax credits, which are a more conventional Canadian film financing model, but it took on a life of its own via Facebook and Twitter when The Smalls fans got hold of it – and good thing, too, since none of the Canadian broadcasters had much initial interest.

**AU: How influential would you say The Smalls have been to the Canadian music scene for people who are not familiar with the band?**  
TS: Not only did they musically explore the fusion of genres and capture something strange and significantly rural and Albertan, they also took the DIY ethic to a whole new level. How they toured, and the markets they braved, are what made them so loveable. Ultimately, it's how they developed a loyal fan base that never left their side. They connected with these kids coming of age, in smaller markets, and those feelings and musical alignments stayed with us as we grew up and went to bigger metro centers.

JK: The Smalls embody something uniquely Albertan or Western Canadian. There's something distinctly rural and real and raw about their music. Nobody can quite put their finger on it - it's not metal and it's not punk and it's not country, but it is at times each of those things and more. Really, it's art. And it's beautiful and truthful and unique. There was always an energy at their shows that was unmistakable. They built a fan base town-by-town. And now a lot of those kids that went to their shows back in the 90s have kids of their own and never will forget the experience The Smalls gave them when they were young.

**AU: When I watched the documentary, I enjoyed some of the insights other people in the scene had about The Smalls and why they did not gain a nation-wide following. One comment that I made note of was in how the people of Eastern Canada did not understand them. I read that as they did not understand the contents of their lyrics. What's your take on that?**  
TS: I think it's more than lyrical content. It's a musical approach. The Smalls just didn't care about trends, or being cool. They wore farm clothes, small town metal T-shirts, hockey jerseys and played in toques and mitts if the situation demanded it. That indifference to the music machine is what made them unique.

There was nothing fabricated about this band. They were all from small Albertan towns, and somehow, as a bizarre foursome, their look and sound was entirely honest and sincere. Fans got that. There was nothing fabricated about The Smalls. It was 100% legitimate, from their heart and artful.

**AU: How would you say the relationships have been within the band since the reunion?**

TS: Amazing. I think it was a great reunion — full of reconnection, memory, and musical celebration. Without the pressures of "being a band" and paying for their next record, this time they were able to simply enjoy the moment every night and share their accomplishments with their rabid fans. For some of them, I think it was the first time they really had the perspective to appreciate the deep impact they had on so many lives. They saved young people, transformed them and were the fabric of many alienated young punks' development.

JK: The reunion tour was a real gift to their fans and to themselves. There were so many moments of pure joy throughout. I think we captured some of that. I hope we did. It was amazing to be around and immersed in that kind of energy. I think the guys learned a bit about themselves and about each other, but most of all, they got to be rock stars again for a few months. How cool is that?

**AU: What was it like touring with them on their reunion tour?**

TS: The tour was really fun. The grind of rock and roll living became apparent to us pretty early on. The driving, the load-ins, the sound checks, the endless naps and fatigue, illness, hotels, boozy clubs, bad food, etc. But all that somehow informs the aesthetic of the film. There's tedium, and a banality, that is part of the paradox of rock stardom.

JK: Trevor and I alternated for much of the tour, with him being busy on a movie at the beginning and me being busy on a bunch of commercials toward the end.

Touring is a pretty tough and grueling, and often mundane, affair. Touring when you're a little bit older – a bunch of dudes in their mid-40s – is an altogether different experience. I recommend it as a good cure for even the most persistent mid-life crisis.

**AU: Were there any problems in finding the story when you were filming?**

TS: Oh yeah. I was terrified there was no story. The tour went so well, everyone was getting along royally.... we were all a little scared the film might be emotionally hollow, and just a puff-piece about their musical legacy. But as we became more and more invisible with the guys, I think they opened up more, and again — trusted us. When we absorbed all their behaviour in editing, we were able to find patterns and themes that, at the time, seemed too gentle to be dramatic. Corb joked with me after the tour that a few fistfights, scuffles or disappearances might have made for a better film.

JK: There was a point at which, I think it's fair to say, we were having trouble seeing the forest for the trees. I think maybe that point comes on any project. The trick is to take a step back and try to look at the whole of things, and if that doesn't work, then step away for a bit and do something completely different for a few days to get your mind off of things.

Once we broke the story into acts and scenes, it became easier to identify and create some stakes for the characters and to more clearly identify, build and follow their character arcs. It was like a frame or a roadmap of sorts that let us create a foundation on which things could grow and change organically.

**AU: Would you say that this film offers closure to**

**those people who had lingering questions about circumstances surrounding the band's breakup?**

TS: I hope so. I think it provides a general understanding of ten years of crazy circumstances, disparate personalities and the toll of making great, conflicted art. Ten years is a massive achievement, not a failure in any sense. What The Smalls did was nothing short of amazing.

**AU: Since the tour was a one-time thing and the bandmates have moved on, do you feel the final moments in the film were a little bittersweet?**

TS: Absolutely. I still get a lump in my throat in that final scene every time. Bittersweet is the exact feeling I'm after. It's such a loaded set of goodbyes after we'd spent so much time getting to understand what the tour meant to each guy individually. And that song is truly one of my favourites. The way the lighting was on those final two nights at the Starlite Room in Edmonton — it just has a darkness and gravity to it. It's heavy. We all knew the end was coming, and struggled with it a bit.

JK: Definitely. But that's life, isn't it? There is no joy without pain. No light without darkness. No love without fear. I think there is something really honest and truthful about that moment when each of the band members walk off the stage for what could be the final time. None of us know when we are going to do anything for the last time. At least these guys chased their dreams and lived



them, if but only for a time.

**AU: When considering their following, how would you define their legacy?**

TS: I think their legacy is best affirmed by the success of the reunion tour. It sold out so fast. The people that came were so into it. They simply lost their shit. It was clear that The Smalls were a defining sound in many western kids' lives. But they were more than just musical inspiration. They made us feel like it was OK to be a little awkward and as long as you believed in yourself, amazing shit could be accomplished. There were a lot of people on that same confused punk/metal/country wavelength. No one can articulate it, or describe their sound accurately, but we can feel a core connection with the attitude.

JK: I'd say The Smalls' legacy, more than anything, is to inspire people to do what they love. Follow your dreams. Whether it's music or art or sports or anything – if you love it, then do it. If you have a gift, then use it and develop it. Experience it. Explore it. Feel joy from it. You don't even need to share it with anyone, but at least do it for yourself, for your own sake, if nothing else. And if it can bring joy to others, well then you have succeeded beyond measure.

<http://www.thesmallsmovie.com>

*Photos courtesy of Kerr & Smith*



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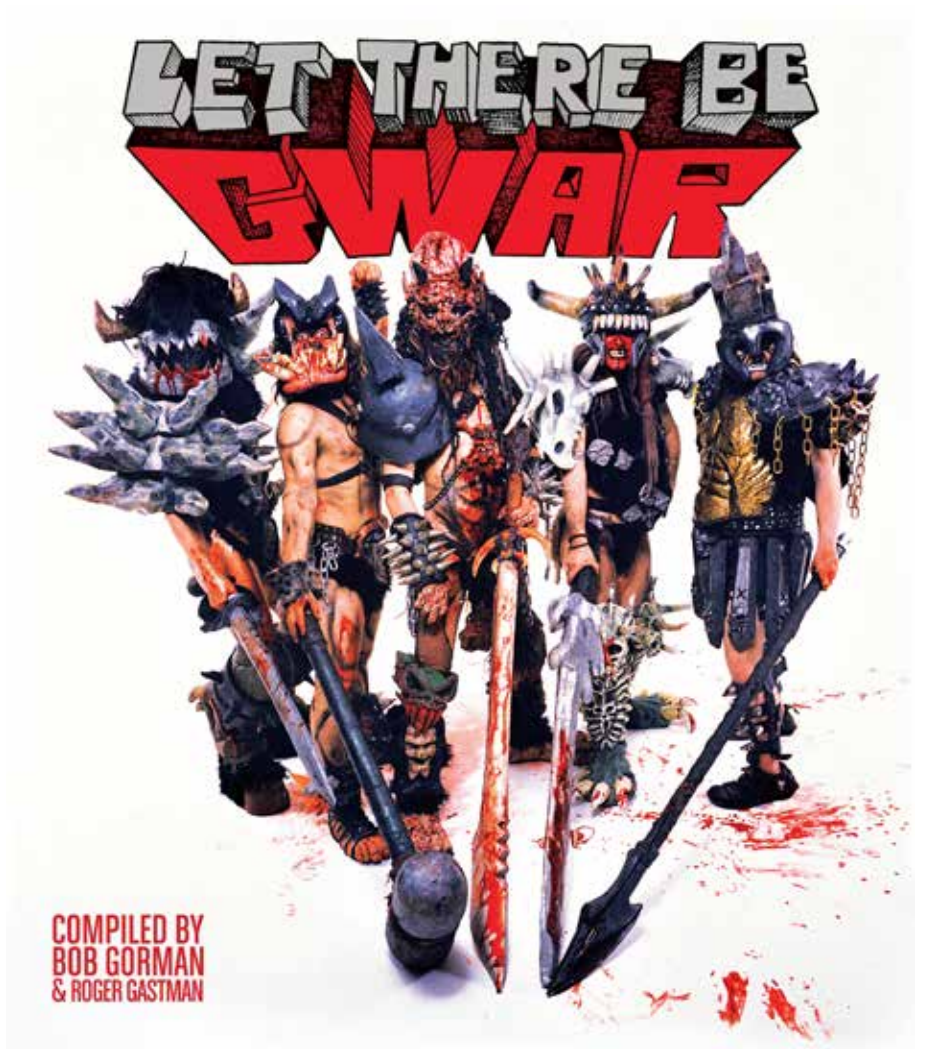


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## LET THERE BE GWAR

Interview with Bob Gorman

By AU Editorial

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?**

Bob Gorman: I'm Bob Gorman and I'm probably best known for being the skateboard kid in *Phallus in Wonderland*... anything that's associated with GWAR, basically. There are a lot of people behind the scenes, and I'm one of them. I've been involved with GWAR for 25 years and I've been mostly behind the scenes, so I might not be well-known at all!

**AU: How did you first get involved with GWAR?**

BG: I was disenfranchised with art school, and GWAR was doing more of what I wanted to do, so through a war of attrition I just started doing more stuff with GWAR, helping out, being more of an intern, and doing less stuff with art school. Then eventually, I left home for the circus. GWAR was not as big or as well-known in 1989 as it is now.

**AU: What was the origin of GWAR?**

BG: The origin of GWAR, it's a very complicated story, that's why no one seems to get it right... to boil it down, there was a dilapidated building in Richmond that a lot of different creative people were working and living in, and one guy was a filmmaker who wanted some musicians in his band, and the movie and the band went away, but GWAR and the collective came out of that. One common misconception about GWAR or about the parent group Slave Pit, is that we're just a rock band, but we're really an art collective that does all kinds of stuff and the band is just one of them.

**AU: So you've been a Pit Slave and you're also Bonesnapper?**

BG: I'm Bonesnapper, I finally got my mainline character about eight years ago or so, but yeah I've been a million different things behind the scenes... I like the anonymity that GWAR provides. You know, Dave, Mike, they're really good at commanding the presence and being "on" most of the time, whereas me, I'm behind the scenes because I want to be. I didn't have a more main character for a long time but eventually I wanted it and we needed a guy to be Dave's sidekick... I enjoyed being that character, I don't always play him but I got to sing my own song on the last album and that was really rewarding. For the most part, for 20 or 30 years of the group, I have been any number of faceless victims in millions of decapitations, any number of other people that were torn apart on stage. And slaves, a lot of people recognize me as my slave character, the skateboard kid from *Phallus in Wonderland*... our fans really get off on figuring out what characters we all play behind the scenes. In *Skulhedface*, the movie we made, we all play a million different characters in that, monsters and

the hot rod in the car show... I like seeing the process pictures. So, seeing the band recording the albums in the studio, seeing the artists building stuff, all the different spaces and dilapidated hardship. We happened to find an audience that really likes what we do, because it's really just about a bunch of artists, musicians and craftsmen getting together and working on some wild stuff. We pay for everything, we aren't sponsored, and it's a lot of hard work. So I know people are inspired by us, they tell me that all the time... so it's just a testament to all the people that have worked so hard for so many years and are still going. So if people are interested in that sort of thing, this is the book for you!

**AU: You spoke at Dave Brockie's memorial... What did he mean to you?**

BG: He was definitely a defining figure in my life... that's a real hard one to say because I worked with him for so long. But I really do think that I needed someone like him, a lot of us in the band needed someone like that as a focal point to sort of push us forward. I think the group itself, once it snowballed, he was the one who started it on the roll down the hill. GWAR was bigger than any one person, but he was a larger-than-life character... he meant a lot to me, he meant a lot to all of us. So we can continue without him because we are bigger than the sum of our parts, but he is sorely missed.

**AU: There was a GWAR documentary in the works too, is that done?**

BG: That got kind of gummed up... the book was going to be self-published because we didn't have a publisher and then Ginkgo came in, and so that really helped us with distribution and with money to pay for the printing. Film is another thing altogether, so I'm just learning... I'm not sure it's kind of mired down in money, trying to find financing to get it finished. I'm pretty stubborn so I feel like it's going to happen eventually. But yeah, there is one and I'm pretty proud of it so far, it definitely needs work but the book took forever, and I think the book, because it took so long, I really have no regrets about it at all. It came out exactly the way I wanted it to, and over the course of so many years, I kept thinking, "Wow, I wish this thing was over, I really wish it was just done with." But if it had come at a different time, it wouldn't have had the arc of the narrative with the 30 years of a story.

**AU: You guys have the GWAR-B-Q, the GWARgoyles, and the GWARbar, is there anything else coming down the pipe?**

BG: We're just doing those things, if you just talked to Blothar recently, you'll know that they are going to record a new album this year, so I think we're going to take some time off from touring and just record with the new lineup, which will solidify us going forward with all the other things. I think Matt Maguire, the other main artist, is really trying hard to get a graphic novel with a sort of an origin story of GWAR... a lot of the fans were into the fact that we did comic books for years and we haven't for a long time so I think we're going to try to get back into comic books. Everyone's got kind of their own vanity project or thing that they're spearheading but it's all we can do to keep the costumes and music going and have the bar running and also the festival. We're always looking for new things, so I think a comic book and this documentary in the future.

**AU: Can you let us in on any new celebrities or people you're planning to slaughter onstage?**

BG: Well with this election coming up, who knows? We try to stay real topical, but there were some complaints that we'd gone way too far with celebrities, where back in the old days, the story was really about these guys from outer space, it wasn't just a *MAD Magazine* where we're just killing popular celebrities, so we've tried to go back and do a little bit of both. This last tour, the narrative was mostly about the barbarians from outer space, and then there was a couple celebrities that came in, so we killed Hillary and Kanye. When we write a show and we build all the costumes, we try and think of just who's the most annoying person out there right now, that everyone wants to see die. There's somebody new to hate, every single day.



So we should probably make a Donald Trump costume soon.

**AU: Where can people get the book?**

BG: If they get it at their local mom-and-pop bookstore, that would be best for everybody, but you know, Amazon has it, you can also get it through GWAR at [Indiemerch.com/gwar](http://Indiemerch.com/gwar). We just went into our second printing, I want to go on a book signing tour, I've done



a couple of those so far in Richmond. If you've seen the book, it's jam-packed with great stuff. I'm really proud of Roger and Nancy and everyone that worked with me on it, it was basically five of us that put the whole book together. So yeah, [Indiemerch.com](http://Indiemerch.com)... but support your local bookstore, too!

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## Absolute Horror

### Cult Epics, Barrel, and German Arthouse Horror

By Vince D'Amato

Over the last few months, the independent retrospective genre label, Cult Epics, has released some of Germany's best and most unflinching horror films onto Blu-ray. Starting with Jorg Buttgerit's *NekRomantik*, the limited-numbered Blu-ray disc also includes the impossible-to-find-in-English short film *Hot Love* which, if you can believe it, is actually more twisted than the necrophelic shenanigans of the director's first feature film. For a while in the early 2000s, one could purchase a European *Hot Love* DVD from the online retailer, XploitedCinema.com, which is sadly long out of business. This online retailer was the first place

I was able to find a reasonably priced DVD copy of Jess Franco's *Exorcism* (the one released by Synapse Films) and they had for sale many great out-of-print and unavailable (on this side of the



to director Roger Watkins' suing them over a spat he had with their special features on the *Last House on Dead End Street* double-DVD release. Ironic, seeing as the whole reason Roger Watkins' film had been available for years on VHS and had developed a cult following without his knowledge was because the original distribution company had quite literally stolen the film from him. Now here was a legitimate distribution company finally putting due care and attention into a new release and special edition DVD of Watkins' film, and he ends up getting in a snit and suing them. This lawsuit was sadly the nail in the coffin for Barrel

Entertainment, a company far too small to deal with any costly lawsuit. But as half-cocked as this lawsuit may have been, it was nevertheless truly sad and unfortunate to learn of director Roger Watkins' passing in relative obscurity in 2007. Barrel Entertainment officially folded that same year.

During the exciting dawn of genre DVD distribution, Cult Epics had also been releasing cult and then-obscure international films onto special edition DVDs, most notably the double-disc version of Abel Ferrara's *Driller Killer* and the triple-disc release of Walerian Worowczyk's *The Beast* (*La Bete*). Nowadays, with

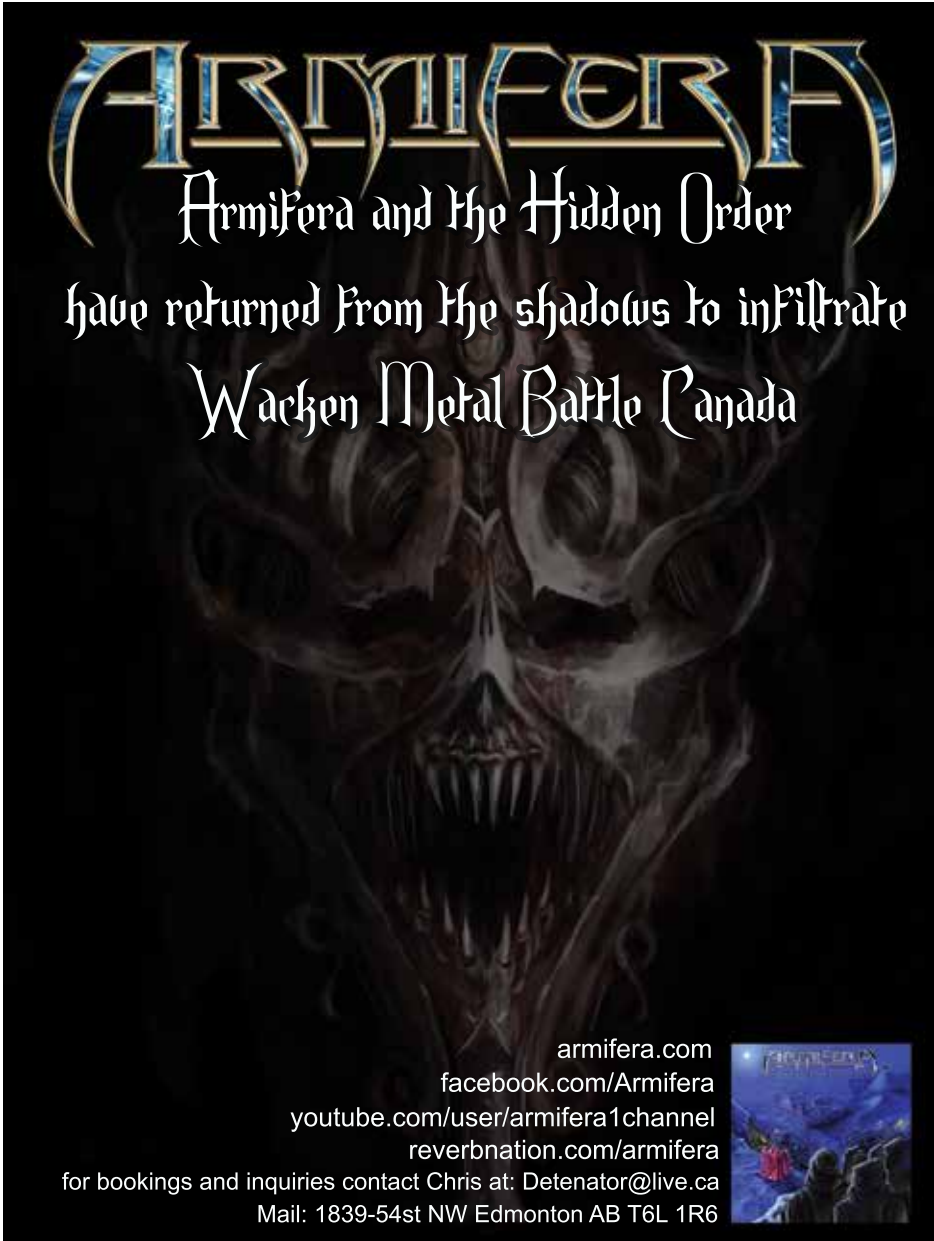
Barrel Entertainment nearly a decade gone, Cult Epics has managed to finally pick up where Barrel had to leave off. After presenting *NekRomantic* and *Hot Love* in a newly-restored, high definition



transfer, Cult Epics has moved ahead to give us his gender-flipped follow-up, *NekRomantic 2*, and his aforementioned masterpiece, *Der Todesking*, on a Blu-ray that also included the feature-length Buttgerit documentary, *Corpse Fucking Art*; and most recently, a hi-def (and English-subtitled) version of Gerald Kargl's *Angst*.

I, like most people in North America, got to experience *Angst* for the first time thanks to Cult Epics' commercial Blu-ray release. To say

water) genre films on DVD and VHS. Around this time, there was another distribution company called Barrel Entertainment. In the early 2000s Barrel was shaping up to become the niche of niche genre DVD distributors, releasing some brilliant cult oddities into the new and exciting retail market of DVD. Indeed, they were the first distributor to bring Jorg Buttgerit's films to North American audiences via home video – *NekRomantic*, *NekRomantik 2*, and *Schramm* - all received glorious special edition DVD releases, as well as some stellar, nearly forgotten, independent films like Roger Watkins' bloody, experimental 1970s horror, *Last House on Dead End Street*, and Leif Jonker's slightly awkward but exciting 16mm vampire gore-a-thon, *Darkness*. In 2005, Barrel Entertainment announced that they were about to release the hugely anticipated, first North American release of Gerald Kargl's German serial killer masterpiece, *Angst*, as a special edition DVD... And then suddenly (or gradually, depending on your point of view), the release became bogged down in constant delays. Nobody really knew what was happening over at Barrel Entertainment, but as a small, independent DVD distributor, it is not uncommon for their DVD releases to experience some minor delays when it comes to their projected release dates. As packed as they were with new, special features and fantastic film transfers, in the case of the ultimately doomed *Angst* release, these delays stretched out to nearly two years before Barrel's antsy fans were starting to give up hope of ever seeing this German arthouse horror film released in Canada and the U.S. Sadly, it had been right to give up on the continual waiting – the release never happened. What none of us fans knew was that Barrel Entertainment was going through some strenuous financial hardship, mostly due



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this film is stunning would be an astounding understatement. It brought to mind another largely unheard-of German arthouse horror film released earlier in 2015 by Mondo Macabro, the fanatic killer thriller, *The Fan*. Both of these highly stylized German horror films were produced in the early-to-mid 80s, and are both amazingly groundbreaking in their depth and exploration of psychological horror cinema. Both of these Blu-rays (as well as the Blu-rays of Jorg Buttgerit)

are currently widely available to purchase online in North America, and I would highly recommend a purchase or two in support of these amazing independent distribution companies who are passionate enough to bring these cult films to North American audiences – because who knows how long this might last in our volatile, dying environment of home video distribution.  
[shiversfilmsociety.com/](http://shiversfilmsociety.com/)







## Holy Grail

Interview by AU Editorial

**Absolute Underground: Hey Holy Grail! Who are you talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Eli Santana: This is Eli, one of the guitar players. Some might say I'm infamous for getting into a street brawl and thrown into a British jail, but I think it's for the wicked receiver routes I used to run when I played high school football.

**AU: Let's get straight to it... You're putting out your third studio album, *Times of Pride and Peril*, this February, correct? What should we expect to hear? Musically speaking, how does it compare to 2012's *Ride the Void*?**

ES: Yes you are correct, our third album, *Times of Pride and Peril*, will be unleashed on the world on February 12th. It actually comes out the same day the movies *Deadpool* and *Zoolander 2* are premiering. We planned it that way, and by "we," I mean the band and the producers of both those movies.

What you can expect to hear on our new album is a pretty strong mix between *Crisis in Utopia* and *Ride the Void*, because we revisited a lot of ideas that didn't make those albums. I also got to incorporate songs I had written before joining Holy Grail, which was pretty rewarding because now those ideas don't haunt me anymore. My first impression after listening back to the new album was that it has more room to breathe than *Ride the Void*. The goal the band and RTV producer Matt Hyde had was to pretty much have wall-to-wall vocals and solos. It was kind of nice to let riffs play out a bit more on *Pride and Peril*.

**AU: Do you explore any particular themes or stories with *Pride and Peril*? What inspired the music and lyrics this time around?**

ES: We actually did, for the most part, stick to a theme, which was a loose concept of the rise and fall of an empire. There were some inner struggles and turmoil that the band faced in between our last touring cycle and the writing of this album. We were kind of at a loss for lyrical ideas before creating an allegory for our troubles and pinning songs to certain points in that story. It was kind of fun to do research on some of the world's greatest empires and see where they all went wrong. Our last song, "Black Lotus," serves as kind of a finale to the album so we got take the gloves off and make the epic we've been talking about for years.

**AU: Tell us about the recording process for this latest release... did everything go pretty smoothly? Any major gear changes?**

ES: Everything went smoothly as far as producer-band relationships go. John Spiker was amazing to work with. He was so easy going and professional that I wish we could've spent a year tracking with him. That being said, our big hurdle was the lack of time we had to track the record. To turn in the record on time before leaving for a tour with Wednesday 13, we had to track guitar and bass at our homes. The problem with that is not having

someone to tell you when a take is good enough or not, and without the editing know-how that most musicians have now-a-days, we actually had to nail a lot of these parts in one long take. Couple that with nitpicking everything... it took a lot of tries.

I got a new guitar from ESP called the E-II which I named "Luscious." This was my workhorse. I literally tracked every single note on this album with that guitar. Sadly, it's in the shop because I broke it going off at a show in Texas.

**AU: What inspires you all as a group, musically or otherwise? Anything we might find unusual?**

ES: Between all of us, we pretty much cover the entire spectrum of rock and metal, as far as influence goes. Luna is pretty influenced by all the NWOBHM bands, Alex has a lot of the Shrapnel shredders influence in his playing, and Blake pulls a lot of Mastodon and Black Tusk into his playing. I bring a lot of death metal and hardcore into our songs, which I feel is an interesting contrast to the high melodic vocals of our singer, Luna. As far as unusual inspiration, Blake and I have been known to hit the 90s R&B pretty hard at karaoke, with some Montel Jordan and R. Kelly, so I'm sure that works its way into our writing. And I did hear our drummer, Tyler, tell a lady in San Francisco that his favourite band is Eminem, I've yet to ask him to confirm or deny that statement. Also, Spiker is really big Queen fan, so he had Luna doing some pretty rad Freddie Mercury backup vocals on this album.

**AU: You've just spend a good chunk of time on the road with the likes of King Diamond, Anthrax, Exodus, Orange Goblin and many more... any favourite tours, tour mates, or cities from the last couple of years? What's the craziest thing that's happened to you on the road so far?**

ES: You just named some of our all-time favourite bands to tour with. We've toured twice with Exodus and would tour with them again in a heartbeat, even though the Exodus guitarist, Lee Altus, played the worst prank on Alex and I. It started as a friendly chat about guitar players over a couple beers, and before we knew it, we were completely sloshed and could barely play. He also convinced half the audience that it was our birthdays, so we kept getting shots on stage. He dared me to do a guitar solo on the bar which I fell off of and split my forehead open. That dude is dangerous. In addition to Orange Goblin, 3 Inches of Blood (RIP), Dragonforce, Amon Amarth and Lazer/Wulf have become good friends after touring. The funny thing is that [when you're] touring with bands that have been at it a while, you get to hang with some of the most laid back and cool people on the planet. It's a bit surreal to have inside jokes with musicians you've idolized.

**AU: You've got a tour booked that sees you playing some pretty extensive dates across Canada and the US... You've toured Canada before, right? How does it compare to the states, touring-wise?**

ES: We've spent a lot of time in Canada... it's been nice to take a break from having to use pennies, like we do in the States. Canadians are really good about buying band merch, if we're ever having a rough time financially, we know we can always make it up in Canada. It's also really, really cold.

**AU: Three things you know about Canadians?**

ES: I know that Canadians love hockey, Rush and Tim Hortons.

**AU: You guys play a pretty classic brand of heavy metal... how do you believe the genre has stayed relevant all these years? Is there still a place for this kind of music in 2016 and beyond?**

ES: I think classic heavy metal stays relevant because the classic bands like Maiden and Priest were influenced by the greatest songwriters of all time, so after you strip away all the theatrics and extremeness, you're left with just really good songs. There will always be a place for metal, because no matter what the masses consider popular, metalheads will always crave the sound of a badass metal riff.

**AU: What's the plan for after this tour? Summer European jaunt? More recording?**

ES: We are definitely going to be touring a lot this summer, but nothing is locked in just yet. We don't have any recording plans on the horizon as a band; I have some side projects that I'll be playing on that I'm excited to get around to. We are, however, planning to do a couple videos for this album, because that's an area we haven't really explored.

**AU: What should we know about Holy Grail that we don't already?**

ES: The official food of Holy Grail is pho. For those of you who don't know what pho is, it's like a Vietnamese soup-and-noodle hybrid. Tyler actually introduced me to it when I first joined, and it was magical... so make sure you

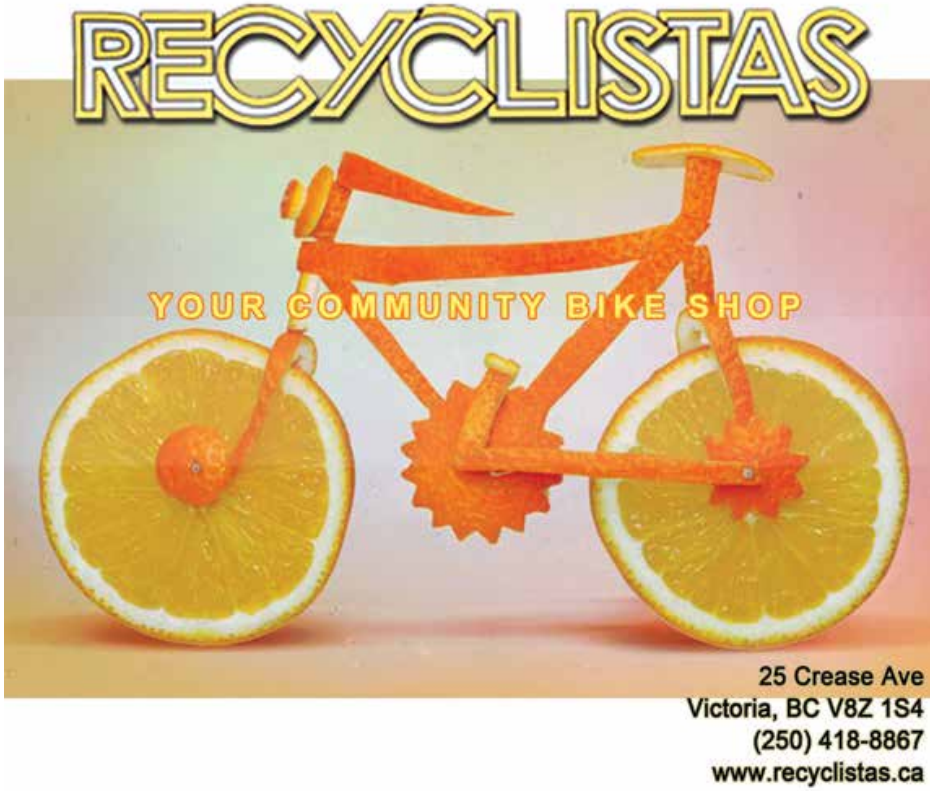
go try it with an experienced pho enthusiast. Also, let us know if there are any good pho spots in your town when you see us on tour.

**AU: Any final words for your Canadian fans?**

ES: We miss our Canadian fans; they're always so good to us. It feels weird calling them fans because we've become friends with so many of them over the years. So to our Canadian friends, get ready to party in a couple weeks, and don't give me shit about my incessant whining about how cold it is there. Fucking Eh Rights, Boys!

[www.holygrailofficial.com/](http://www.holygrailofficial.com/)

PHOTO SOURCE: <http://prostheticrecords.com/>



**AU: What was the spark that started you working on this new album? How did the recording process this time around compare to your previous releases?**

JL: The spark always comes from the desire to create, to want to make new music and express new ideas. The recording process has been pretty similar throughout our career, with the exception of the people involved. This time we recorded the album with Jonathan Nuñez in Gainesville, Florida at Black Bear Studio. Jonathan has been a friend of ours for years and we have admired his work for a long time (both live and recorded [work] with Torche and Shitstorm, among others). We also like working with new people to get different perspectives on the recordings. Recording for us is always under a bit of a time crunch, and this was no different. In addition, a couple of amps blew in the process, making things a little more chaotic than usual.

**AU: Are you happy with the final result? Do you have any favourite tracks to play live?**

JL: We are extremely happy with the final result! Jonathan did an excellent job capturing and manipulating the sounds. So far, we have only played one song live, "The Messenger," but we are looking forward to playing a lot of the new material on this upcoming tour. We have been rehearsing the entire album and all the songs are really fun to play.

**AU: What are your plans after the completion of**



**this tour? More tours? More albums? What does the future hold for Black Cobra?**

JL: More tours and more albums. We're working on rounding out 2016 with a bunch of more tour dates to support *Imperium Simulacra*. We're basically going to keep doing Black Cobra until we can't or don't want to.

**AU: Any final words for your Canadian audience?**

JL: We look forward to seeing you soon!

[www.blackcobra.net](http://www.blackcobra.net)

PHOTO CREDIT: [www.blackcobra.net](http://www.blackcobra.net)

# SHRED SESSION



## PD

Interview by Malcolm Hassin

Malcolm from SBC sat down for a chat with PD, owner of Skull Skates, for Absolute Underground.

**Absolute Underground: How long have you been skateboarding?**

PD: 40 years-ish.

**AU: When did you start Skull Skates and where?**

PD: I started Skull Skates with my older brother. The shop [started] in 1976, then the Skull Skates brand officially came out in 1978. Regina, Sask. is where it officially got going. It was called GNC Skates (Great Northern Country Skateboards) and then it morphed into Skull Skates. In 1979-80 we moved back to Vancouver.

**AU: What/who were your influences?**

PD: People who are stoked to blaze their own

trail and be innovative and make things happen. I would say a bunch of bands from Vancouver, like DOA, Subhumans, Pointed Sticks. With skateboarders it was Jay Adams, Tony Alva, Shogo Kubo. Sort of all those dogtown dudes.

**AU: What's your interpretation of the connection between punk rock and skateboarding?**

PD: Punk rock and skateboarding are the same thing. It's the idea of something coming into your mind, your imagination, and you make it into a reality. You don't wait for people to tell you it's okay, or show you how to do it, you just figure it out. Skateboarding is the same thing; you jump fences and you look at something, an obstacle or an empty pool, something on the street, and your imagination kind of takes over. You think, "What could I do with this?" Then you figure it out and do it. Punk rock, art, skateboarding, hip-hop, and graffiti... I consider them all to be really the same. Surf music, too. When it comes down to it, the intricacies differ, but it's all the same thing.

**AU: Everything Skull Skates makes is made in Canada. Why is that?**

PD: It's getting more difficult because of a lot of Canadian manufactures are being driven out of the business by large corporations and imported, cheaply produced products. We're running probably at 80 and 90% made in Canada or North America. It's easier to keep a handle on the quality of stuff when you're making it locally. Of course, working conditions in other countries mean that workers in manufacturing jobs have pretty shitty lives. It's better for us, if we can, to not endorse that.

**AU: What do you think about the skate industry now compared to when you first got into the business?**

PD: The skate industry is the same now as it's always been, pretty much a lot of flakes and

money-hungry kooks and knuckleheads trying to get a piece of the action. Like me, when I started! To this day, I'm still trying to get a piece of the action. The big difference is that corporations and multinationals all want a piece of skateboarding now. Early on, they weren't concerned about it. Skateboarders were nerds that became the cool people. If you're into anything as much as skateboarders are into skateboarding, you're basically a nerd. Somewhere along the line, people outside of skateboarding started to consider skateboarders cool. "Cool" sells products for big companies. Big shoe companies and energy drink companies don't give a shit about skateboarding. Skateboarders influence the greater culture, without meaning to do so. That's important when you're trying to sell crap people don't need. It helps to shove it down their throats a bit more easily if they give it some sort of cornball credibility.

**AU: Any advice for anyone wanting to get into the biz?**

PD: Yeah... Don't do it! It's fucked up, dude. There's already way too much stuff, you know, people should have ideas and express themselves and stuff, but it doesn't need to be [through] a product. Make some art, [make] a sand mandala and sweep it away. Be creative! I just think everything doesn't need to be a product. The same way you can skateboard and never plan to be a sponsored skateboarder. It's a pain in the ass, because people who are trying to get to the good stuff have gotta weed through all the shit to get there. Bottom line: it doesn't matter if we're talking skateboarding or anything else; there's too much stuff on this planet. Most of it's headed straight to the landfill, with a brief intermission on the way there.

**AU: Who should we interview next?**

PD: As far as people who are alive and still walking

around, I would say Carlos Longo would be a good person to interview.

**AU: Shout-outs or thank-yous?**

PD: I wasn't supposed to be here. My older brothers had blown up the condoms like balloons and my parents got home from a party, and there were no condoms. So thanks, Mom and Dad. I want to say thanks for supporting Skull Skates, but I don't think that's exactly accurate. It's more like: thanks for supporting independent art, independent music, just anything that's worthwhile, anything that comes from the bottom up, and not from the top down, things that come from peoples' hearts.

[www.skullskates.com/](http://www.skullskates.com/)

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# Black Cobra

## Black Cobra

Interview by Andre Laniel

**Absolute Underground: Hey Black Cobra! What's new and exciting? You're heading out for a huge North American tour with Bongzilla in mid-February... are you stoked or what?**

Jason Landrian: Yeah, it should be an exciting run. Rafa played shows with Bongzilla when he was in the band 16-some years ago. My old band, Cavity, also played shows and even had a split with them awhile back as well (although before I was a member). There's some history there, and it'll be nice to bring it around full circle and tour with them.

**AU: What are your feelings on touring in Canada? Better/worse/different than the States?**

JL: Aside from having to cross the border, the touring is pretty similar to the States. We've had some really good shows in Canada in the past and are looking forward to playing there again.

**AU: Can you tell us a bit about your influences,**

**musical or otherwise?**

JL: We draw influences from all over, including music, film, books and our own experiences. Musically, we try not to be directly influenced by any one thing in particular. Metallica, Melvins, Black Flag, John Carpenter, Martin Denny, Philip K. Dick and Napalm Death have all influenced us in some way or another.

**AU: Where did you get your band name from?**

JL: It comes from the title of an old film starring Jack Palance and Laura Gemser. We thought it was a name that represented the ferocity of the music and our love of dangerous beasts.

**AU: Tell us about your new album, *Imperium Simulacra*. Does it have a particular theme or topic?**

JL: There are recurring themes throughout the record, of manipulation and deception, facing and causing our own destruction, technology advancing faster than we can keep up with and the possible repercussions of something like that happening. [They're] things that have been talked about for ages, but we're currently in an age where it seems like a more urgent concern. It still keeps in the spirit of all of our records though, exploring fantastic scenarios.





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## Venom Inc Iron & Steel

Interview by Ira Hunter

**Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself and let us know what your are most infamous for.**

Jeff "Mantas" Dunn: You're talking to Mantas, founding member and original guitarist of Venom. What am I most infamous for? Everyone will say we were the original start of black metal, we gave the genre its name and started the whole movement of extreme metal. We get tagged with this all the time, and sometimes for me it's quite hilarious to think that we've had such an influence, but apparently that is the case.

**AU: How have you liked the shows you've played in Canada so far?**

M: It's amazing. We were there with Mpire of Evil, a few years ago, but this time was great, really good shows, they've just gotten crazier and crazier as we've gone along. Unfortunately we missed the Vancouver show because of the weather, we drove about 25 hours and we eventually had to turn back because police were stopping people all over the place and there was no way we could make the show in time. I live in Portugal now and I even got a call from my girlfriend saying there was weather warnings all at that end of America, they were calling it "Snowmageddon", on the Portuguese news, apparently. But we are going to reschedule, so hopefully we'll be back to fulfill that show before October.

**AU: Back in the beginning, what inspired Venom to be such an evil band?**

M: Just that desire to take everything a step further. We've always cited four bands as our influences, Priest, Sabbath, KISS and Motorhead, and I think to this day, I don't know what we did different, I think it was right time, right place, I think the world was ready for something different, and we just happened to be it. But on the side of the imagery, and the lyrics, and the music, we just want to stuff it in peoples' faces, just be as extreme as we possibly can, and I think we achieved that. There was definitely the intention to shock the public, and if they ran away screaming, great. If they embraced it, even better. There was nothing preconceived or contrived about it. The songs that I wrote, I've always said, I was armed with a moveable power chord in first position of the pentatonic scale, and that was it. I wrote just basic rock 'n' roll blues riffs, and what came out was apparently something different than what everybody else had heard. But it has taken me this long in my career, now being reunited with Abaddon, to realize that the actual sound of Venom, apart from the vocal style, comes from myself and Abaddon, because people see this tour and they can't believe how authentic it sounds in comparison to the early days.

**AU: The song and album title "Black Metal," how did you come up with that?**

M: It originally came up through an interview, and during the process of this interview, there was the English heavy metal magazine *Kerrang!* on the coffee table, and on the cover was Bon Jovi, and this guy had said, "I can't really say that you're heavy metal or that you're punk, what are you guys?" And we looked at the magazine and said, "Well if this is what you consider to be heavy metal, Bon Jovi," and at that point in England

especially, every person who had long hair and guitar was classed as a heavy metal band, so we said, "If that's what you count as heavy metal, then no, we don't feel we've got anything in common with that," and then the obvious question came, "Well, so what are you?" and we said, "We're black metal, we're power metal, speed metal, death metal, we're everything." The black metal tag just stuck.

**AU: Did you like punk music as well?**

M: We had a lot of punks who followed us in the early days, I remember when we played Hammersmith Odeon in 1984, there were a lot of punks in the front row, so I think we had that crossover appeal. Myself, I was aware of the punk movement, but I was never a fan. There were certain things that I did like, but for me, my heart was always in metal, I've always said my metal world begins with the word "Judas" and ends with the word "Priest." But I think we had that punk, don't-give-shit attitude. If you like it, you like it. If you don't, you don't. We don't care. So we had that sort of attitude there, but I was always driven by heavy metal, always.

**AU: So what was the scene like in Newcastle?**

M: In Newcastle at that point, you're talking about the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal... we had two main venues in Newcastle, the Newcastle City Hall, and the Mayfair, and god, everybody played the Mayfair. I've seen AC/DC with Bon Scott there. I remember seeing Samson there, they were probably my favourite of the New Wave, Judas Priest even played the Newcastle City Hall one night, and then the Mayfair the next night, and their support was the original lineup of Iron Maiden. In Newcastle itself, there was a very healthy scene, you had the Tygers of Pan Tang, Fist, White Spirits, Iron Maiden, but Venom were always the outcasts, we were always the band that everybody looked at and thought, "What the hell are those guys doing?"

**AU: Was Venom's Satanic imagery based on religious beliefs, or was it more for shock value?**

M: Each member of the band at that point, we all had an interest in the dark side, I grew up on old horror films, old Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney Jr, and *Monster* magazines. We then all had a bit of a read of *The Satanic Bible* and this kind of thing, but from a religious aspect, I've got no religious provocations whatsoever. I'm not a religious person in any way, shape or form. There was no preaching within the songs. Even on *Welcome to Hell*, yes there was a Satanic element, but there was also the song about a serial killer "Schizo", there's even songs about venereal disease with "Poison". It was always a bit on the seedier side of life as it was, but yeah there was definitely an intention to shock. Seeing what other bands were doing that came before us, like Sabbath and Black Widow. But I've always said, if you trace it way, way back to the Delta where you've got Robert Johnson and all these guys were all singing about the Devil way before anybody else.

**AU: What caused the original separation of the band?**

M: Well I left in '86, it was due to an incident which occurred in 1985 at the Loreley Festival, there was a nasty incident, it was horrible. A lot of people have said to me, was it musical differences or finances, things like that, but no, it was just purely down to personalities.

**AU: So now you're back and you're doing Venom Inc with Abaddon on drums and Demolition Man on bass and vocals.**

M: Yep. That all came around when Mpire of Evil was booked to play at the Keep it True Festival, then a band called Cauldron, asked me to go up and play "Die Hard"

with them and Abaddon was in the audience. Later it was agreed that we'd get on stage, do two songs, and that was it, just a special thing for the festival. Then by the time we came offstage, the reaction was phenomenal and it's just gone absolutely crazy. But it was totally unintentional! And the whole thing is being fan-driven, it's been the fans who are calling us Venom, it's been the promoters calling us Venom, because I came up with the name Iron and Steel but it's become sort of secondary to this whole Venom thing. I gave Cronos permission in 2005 to use the Venom name, although my head wasn't in the right place at that time because my mother was essentially dying at that point, and he called me and I said I didn't give a shit

about the band name, do whatever you want. So then we came up with Venom Inc, we've all got things that we do, Abaddon's still got his side project, I've still got a little project called Dryll, Tony "Demolition Man" has still got Atomkraft, we've still got Mpire of Evil, we've got new albums already recorded, so we just wanted to incorporate everything under one umbrella. Venom Inc. has been put on every single show that we've done, and no fan has chanted "Venom Inc," the audience chants, "Venom." Every fan that I have spoken to, without exception, has said that you guys are the real deal, you are the real Venom. We are going to do a new album in the fall.

**AU: What songs are in your current set-list?**

M: We play a lot of the early stuff, we open with "Prime Evil," then you'll get "Live Like an Angel," "Sons of Satan," "Bloodlust," "Buried Alive," "Raise the Dead," "Seven Gates of Hell," "Satanachist". It's all there, "Die Hard" is in there, "Black Metal Countess," "Witching Hour," "Welcome to

Hell," all the early stuff's there.

**AU: When you're working on a new song, do you have to put yourself in an evil headspace?**

M: No, not at all. I'll write constantly. I've got tons and tons of music. Predominantly I write alone. The tale of how I wrote "Black Metal," is you know how some people in the morning, you have a coffee and a cigarette and you go to the toilet for a dump and some people take a magazine in there, one day I took a guitar in and the riffs of "Black Metal" came out, and that is a true story.

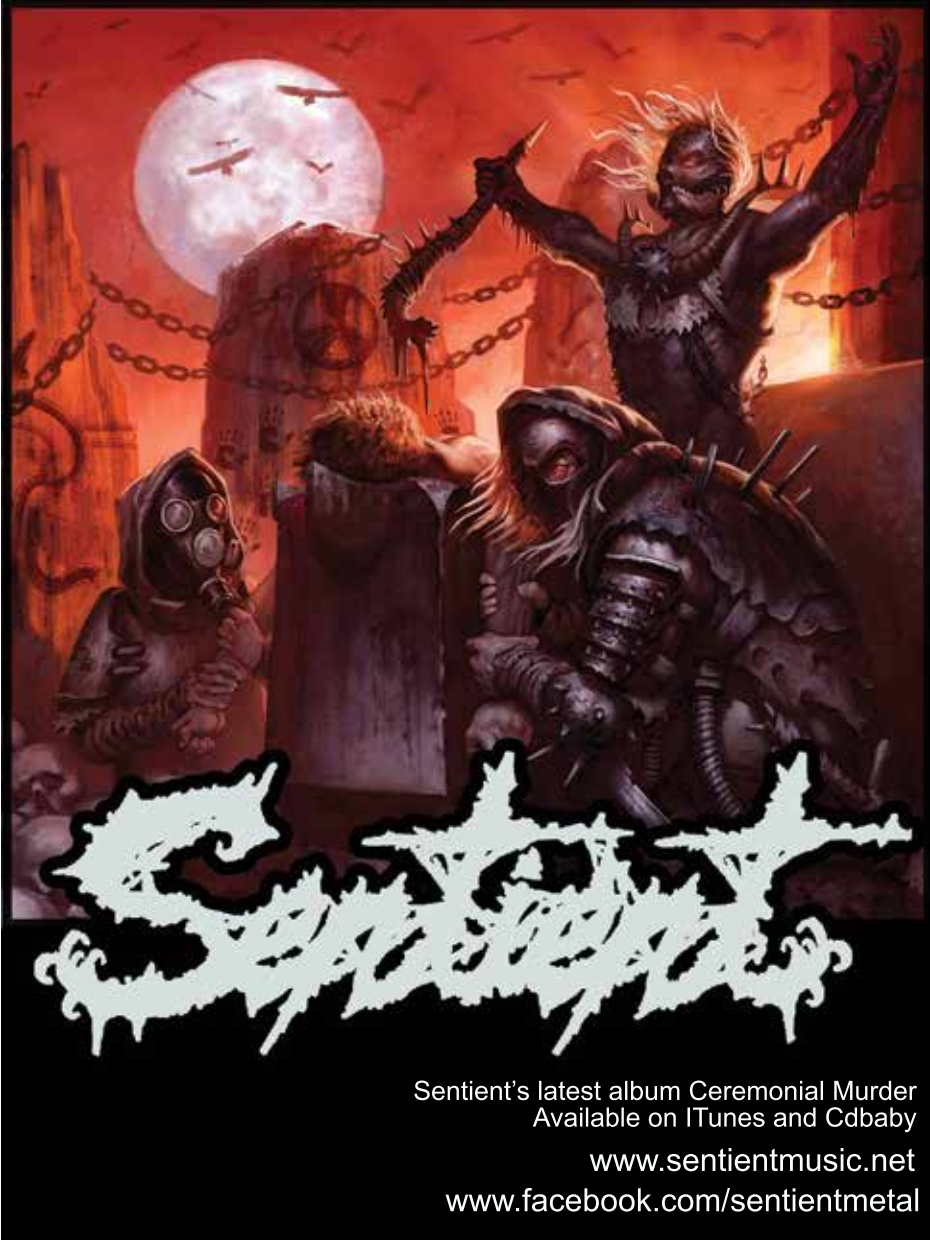
**AU: It came from the bowels of Hell.**

M: It comes from the balls and it comes from the heart; if you think about it too much, it doesn't happen. You've gotta let a song write itself, you've gotta let it breathe, you've got to let it evolve... some of the best songs come together in minutes. If you're working too long on a song, you're overcomplicating it.

**AU: Final words for Canadian metal fans?**

M: Same as I say to every single fan that we play in front of, and that is that they've got to remember that they are the reason that we are here. Without those guys, we don't exist. They're the lifeblood, they're the oxygen, they are the engine of the music industry, and without those guys, none of it happens. Every band should realize that, and I'm so grateful for it. Thank you to every single fan.

<http://www.venom-inc.com/>



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**The Real McKenzies**

*Interview by Esther Wurley*

Working up to 737 Productions' showcase of The Real McKenzies (March 11th at Upstairs Cabaret), I had an opportunity to speak with their fearless leader, Paul McKenzie, and bagpiper Gord Taylor, about their ninth LP, *Rats In The Burlap*, which was released in 2015 on Fat Wreck Chords.

**Absolute Underground: Was there anything different about the conception of *Rats In The Burlap* than any of your previous releases?**

Paul McKenzie: There were a few new players on this new album, so of course things will be a bit different. One of the things different about this album is the fact that I

did most of the vocals in Vancouver. I liked going to a local studio. I think, perhaps, I shall do it again

**AU: What is it that keeps the band going, and consistently improving with each new release?**

PM: Time has a way of honing one's way through the passage of life. I suppose as you target perfection with each try, you get closer and closer to the target. Let's see what we come up with on our upcoming musical extravaganza.

**AU: Explain the song "Lilacs In The Alleyway"?**

Gord Taylor: It's no secret that I like drugs. Actually, during the past few years, I've been living more soberly, but that's not the point of this story. When I became a truck driver, I was randomly drug-tested. So I got into LSD and Brake Clean to avoid pot. I used to huff solvents to get high because it was untraceable. The only thing a drug test really busted you on was pot. They could catch you with cocaine or meth in your system, but after time off, you could pee clear. Throughout my life, many people didn't agree with what I chose to do with my body and mind. I wasn't hurting anyone, I liked who I was, so what the fuck did it matter if I wanted to smoke speed, do coke, or smoke joints? Sidebar: The first people in my life to ever flat-out accept me for who I was, were my oldest friend, Matt MacNasty, and soon after, The Real McKenzies.

Actually, these are my only friends who continue to behave as they did when they first introduced themselves. That's called

integrity, and unfortunately it seems to be a dying value today. I guess I just got used to being ostracized. A few years back, while avoiding the sidewalk, and society, walking down a back lane in Winnipeg, I was smoking a joint. While enjoying my forced solitude, I noticed lilacs growing through a decrepit, chain-link fence under the hot sun in this dirty, garbag-y alley. I was inspired by the duality of the situation: stuck in an ugly, shitty alley, trying to enjoy living life, bummed out by the jerks who make things hard, but finding poetry and beauty all around me. That melody and first line came to me right there. When the time for *Rats* came about, due to a bad accident I was involved in, I was ashamed of not being able to finish 'Lilacs,' so I could sell the guys on it. For so long the song sounded incomplete and weak, I guess I thought that I fucked it up. But when Fat Mike and the band listened to it, they seemed to hear potential in it.

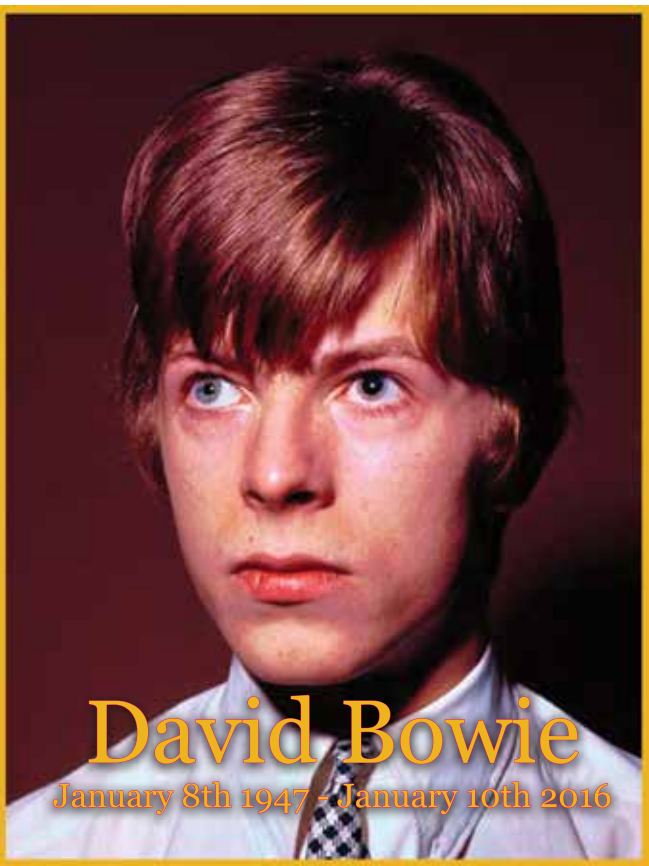
Convinced that I should proceed with it, they encouraged me to finish the lyrics. One in morning I was in San Francisco, sitting in Uzi Park for few morning whiskeys and a joint, with my shirt open, enjoying the sun and view, when two young black schoolgirls came walking along. One of them, very politely, asked about my scars (from the accident). After I told her, she said to me, "Goodbye, and never be ashamed to tell your story!" That's fucked up, right? Being forced to be alone granted me this very unique opportunity to meet those unforgettable, smart, young Californian girls and 'share a bit of thought'. The second verse came after my walk where I noticed a butterfly landing on a bush just outside the studio door. Once the start of the song was complete, the chorus came pretty naturally. Paul, Bone and Troy worked magic with 'Lilacs,' and really put the best touches on it to turn it into what it is. I really like the final product. It still represents the subject I wanted to sing about and the boys really finished it off beautifully.

**AU: Any plans to tour countries you've never visited before, or have you done the whole globe by now with your relentless touring schedule?**

PM: We are looking forward to touring Mexico and South America, as well as China along with Indochina, and of course Europe, Russia, Africa, Australia, North America, Hawaii, and Fiji. People seem to enjoy our style here on this planet, as do we.

**AU: When you first formed The Real McKenzies, did you ever think that, 23 years later, you'd have a biography written about your band? Or even that you'd still be a band that's achieved as much as you have so far?**

PM: I have been bestowed with a Celtic phenomenon described as "second sight." This lets the beholder have glimpses into the future. It's not always nice, not always pretty, as you can well imagine. So the answer to this question is yes, I have seen what has and will happen, not only with the band, but the world. I have seen the way I shall leave this world and pass on to the next. I do



not wish to frighten you or anyone, but hold on tight, as there shall be a very rocky road ahead for all of us. I don't mind, I enjoy a reasonable amount of trouble, so I find it all terrifyingly interesting. I mean... it's not like we have a choice in the matter of what our destiny holds.

Tickets are on sale now at Cavity Curiosity Shop, BC Smoke Shop & online @ universe.com/therealmckenziestvictoria2016

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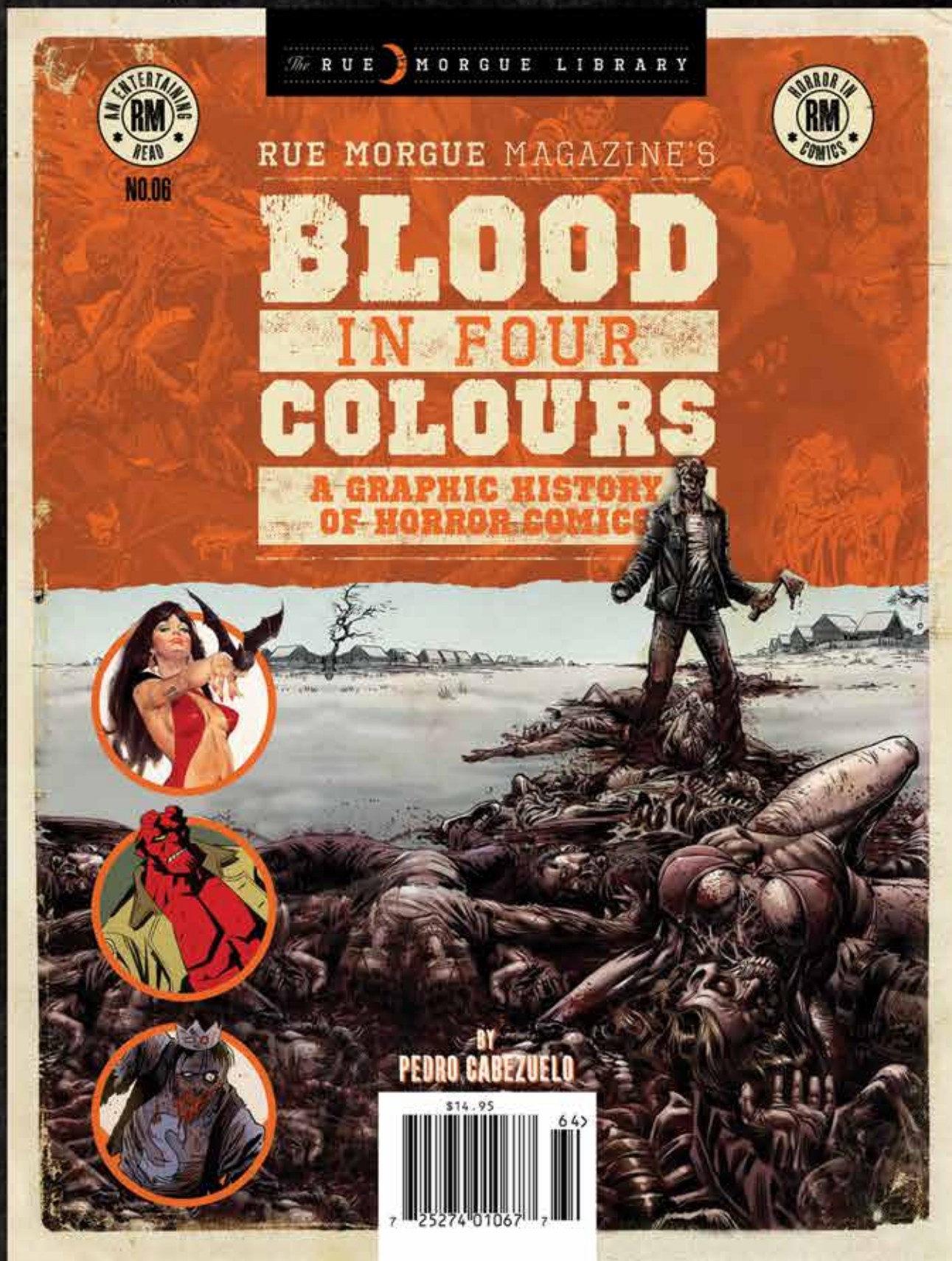
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